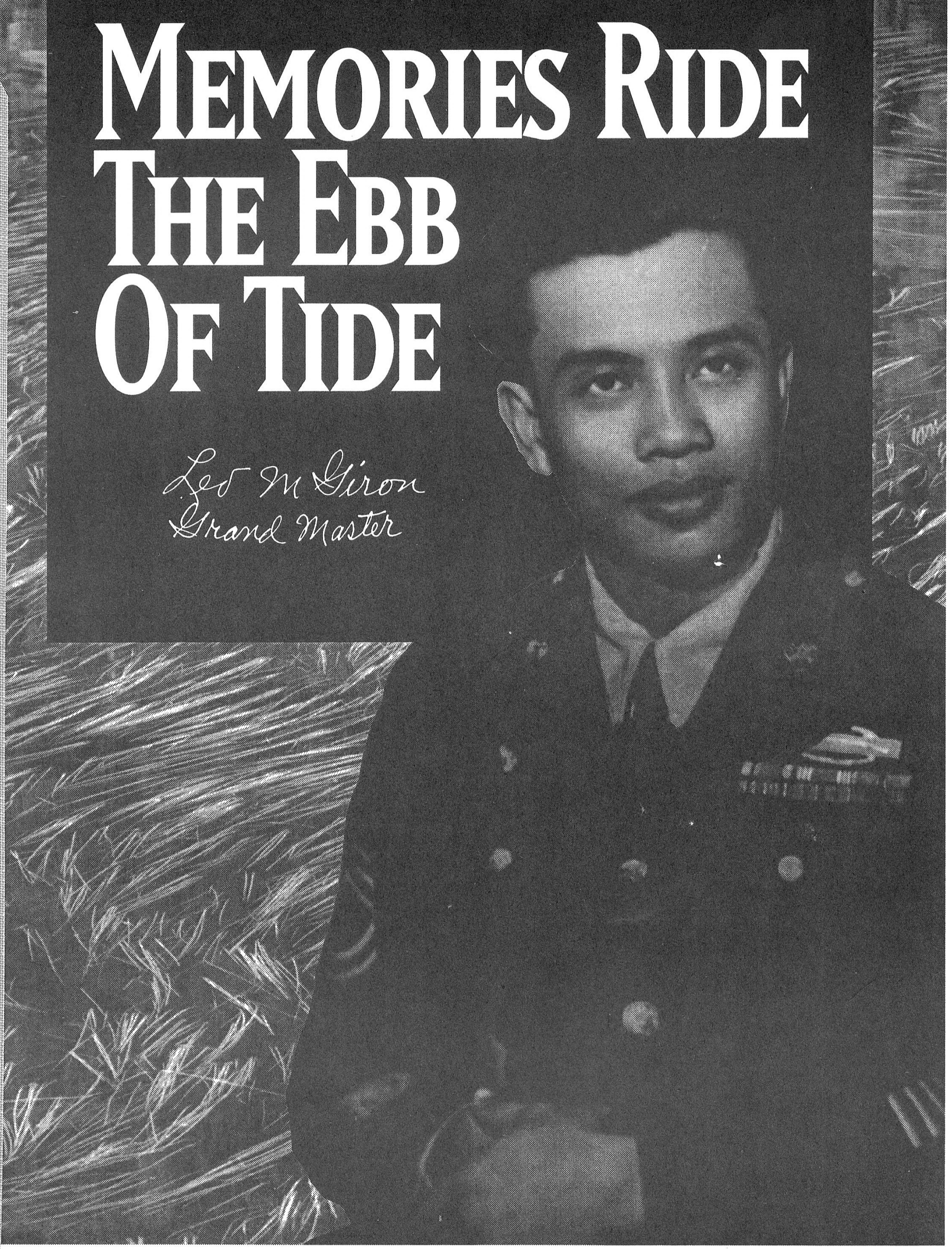
Memories Ride The Ebb Of Tide

Leo M Giron
Grand Master



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MEMORIES RIDE THE EBB OF TIDE

by Leo M. Giron

Special Thanks to:
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book, first, to my beloved wife Alberta who inspired me and help bring back memories of stories told when my mind was still alert and retentive. These are stories of fading experiences during World War II. She laughed when the situation related was funny; such as an old man squatting at attention saluting with his left hand with a big home made cigar in his mouth as we passed by. She laughed at the thought of me out speaking a Japanese cook in the guerrilla outfit in Japanese language simply because I was a little high on some homemade wine.

I also dedicate this book to my loyal assistant Tony Somera who takes high interest in the art. Also to Dexter Labonog who is a very efficient instructor in the club.

I cannot summon enough knowledge and gather as many words to compose the feeling of gratitude for their inspiration to carry on the efforts in preserving and propagating this indigenous Filipino Art of Escrima. My heartfelt thanks to all of them.

Leo M Giron
Grand Master

PREFACE

Many writers of martial art books and short articles pertaining to the combat art of Escrima borrow information from others who might have claimed high honors and holding high degrees in contest arenas. These articles or books are glamorized with beautiful words blended so well to make the picture seemingly realistic and captivating. This certainly exalts the idol of the story to the highest degree of fame and in many cases makes the reader believe that the art is singularized; that no other style exist and no places are familiar of any sort of self defense.

It is the purpose of the writer to inform the reading public that problems arise from everywhere. Henceforth solutions are evolved. Solutions from where and by whom? is queried. Where the seed of evil sprouts, grows and thrives is where the root is dug out to wither and dry out for good.

Man, The Elements, Beasts and Time

Man vs. the Elements

Man roamed around the surface of the earth not knowing what existed. Later he discovered that there were elements that posed a threat to his well being. He soon realized that the sun beat down on him during the summer, strong winds came in the fall, followed by the winter snows that made the temperature, at times, unbearable. During the spring, torrential rains inundated the rivers and flooded the fields.

As the weather changed man opened his eyes and evolved a certain amount of preparedness because he understood that the cycle of mother nature was one of expected seasonal change.

Man vs. Beast

As man matured he sought protection in caves only to discover he was not alone in this struggle. In the caves were beasts of different types and sizes. Every cave was occupied, and out of fear of each other some of these animals became vicious. When confronted, some would turn away but the majority of these inhabitants would charge with fury in an attempt to hold ground.

Because man was born with the ability to reason, he realized that man and beast could not reside together. Man devised a way to protect himself not only from the devastating impact of the elements but from the furious animals that dominated the caves. Through trial and error, he learned to improvise a simple shade to protect himself from the excessive heat of the sun. He had at that point discovered that a simple roof would provide protection at least during the summer. While enjoying the cool air under the simple roof, man was aware that animals would roam about this area looking for food, so he understood that a roof alone was not sufficient for his survival. A strong fence surrounding his simple shelter was added, for the wild beasts would not yield to man. A hungry animal waits for no signal.

The Seasons

While man had provided the minimum protection against sunlight and intruders, there were harsher elements to contend with. As the seasons changed, and the weather, especially winds and rain, became more severe, it became necessary to construct a gabled roof with the eaves secured

to the ground. There were times when even this would not suffice, i.e., when hurricanes and tornadoes would destroy everything in sight.

Maturity of the Mind

Through time man understood what was to come and began to prepare. Repairs and improvements for forthcoming seasons were made. He increased the thickness of the grass on his roof and reinforced the walls and frame of his structure. Other innovations were to place wind breakers a short distance from his home according to his acquired knowledge of wind direction and seasonal rainfall.

Man vs. Man

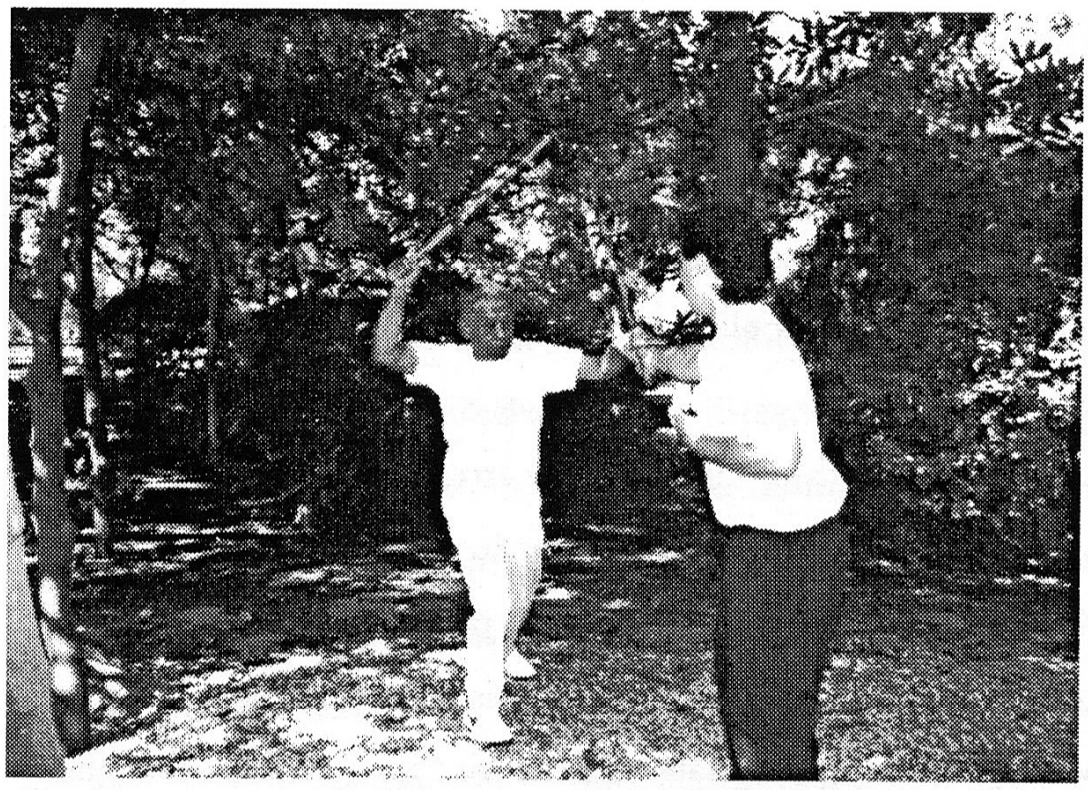
While dealing with both wild creatures and the elements, man understood that he would have to cope with the aggressions of his own kind. At first, there were no serious discord. As with the animals, man was endowed with natural instinct. They appeared to be alike, ate the same food, struggled together in the presence of the elements and reasoned alike in their quest for survival.

As time passed, tribes multiplied and intermingled. It was through this process that it became apparent that two persons did not always think alike. Sometimes, as they attempted to overcome their difficulties, the problems between two people, out of error, would become compounded. It was common, at times, to feel as if nothing fit and every attempt to success was doomed to failure. In this context mans mind became murky; his day became unbearable; the whole world appeared to collapse. Man felt buried under the debris of failure. His view of his fellow man became distorted. The whole universe was bleak. It was at this point that man would lose self control and, due to his animal instincts, raise his hand against his fellow man. The constancy of this unwanted action, once a growing habit, created a serious concern among local inhabitants. It was apparent among members of the tribe that something needed to be done.

Art of Self Defense Evolved

As mother nature brought the seasons through the years, allowing their elements to exercise their routine, man hit upon an idea for his personal preservation: if a simple roof can provide a shade for himself why not a similar technique for protecting himself, as a block, against blows from

Roof Block



an aggressor. He attempted this technique with other members of the tribe. He blocked as they struck and it worked. Again and again, with ever increasing force, the blows were blocked without fail. This technique became known as the roof block.

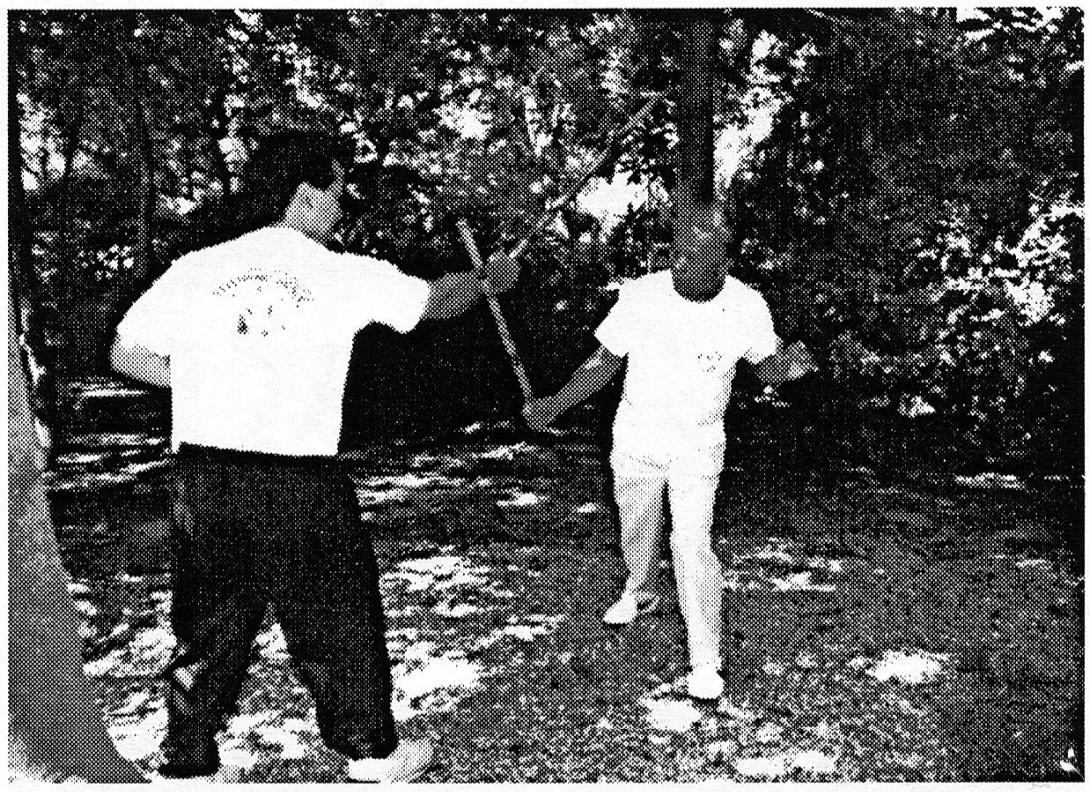
When man brought much grass and twigs inside his hut for reinforcement the inner portion became smaller in dimension. Subsequently, its accommodations were reduced, thus further reinforcement, man was required to work on the outside. In the developing growth of self defense, this became symbol of the outside block.

As the roof got thicker and became heavier with rain soaked grass, man sought to defend from the inside. Arising from this concept in self defense is the inside block.

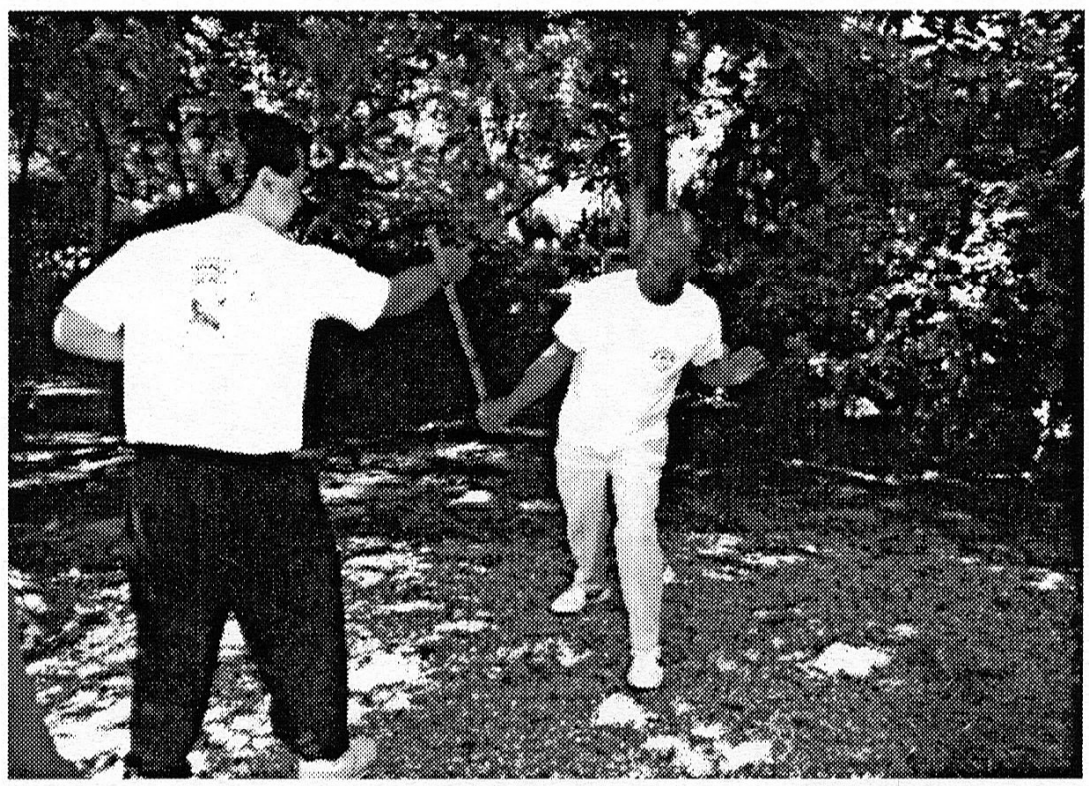
Strong gusts of wind would often accompany the rain. This also added pressure to the flimsy structure from whichever direction it originated. The strong limb of a tree or sturdy bamboo was needed to prop the house, placing a very long piece of such material from one end or peak of the roof to the other for it's support. Props were placed within at every point Where weight was abundant and under any other area which may have appeared to be weak. In relation to the art of self preservation, the cross heavy is used in a similar manner.

Sometimes a wind break is planted outside the structure to deflect most of the awesome strength of the storm. In the art of self defense, a similar deflection may be noticed.

At times, man would plant green trees to provide a more permanent barricade to reduce the pressure of a whirlwind or a tornado, this was erected through the planting of green trees and shrubs. During the heavy rain when floods would threaten homes that stood in the pathway of the roaring and angry water, flowing from the side of the hills, barricades such as these were needed to divert the swift flow of the stream that would eventually join the main stream down to the ocean. In order to accomplish the diversion properly, the angle of the barricade needed to be correct. Just as the sail boat would position it's sail a quarter turn in order to effectively slice into the wind, the water barricade is also carefully positioned. The wedge shape of the barricade would be planted so that the main force of the rushing water would be diverted to either side, thus keeping the very center safe, since it is where mans precious home stood. In the art of self defense, this is regarded as a parrying technique.

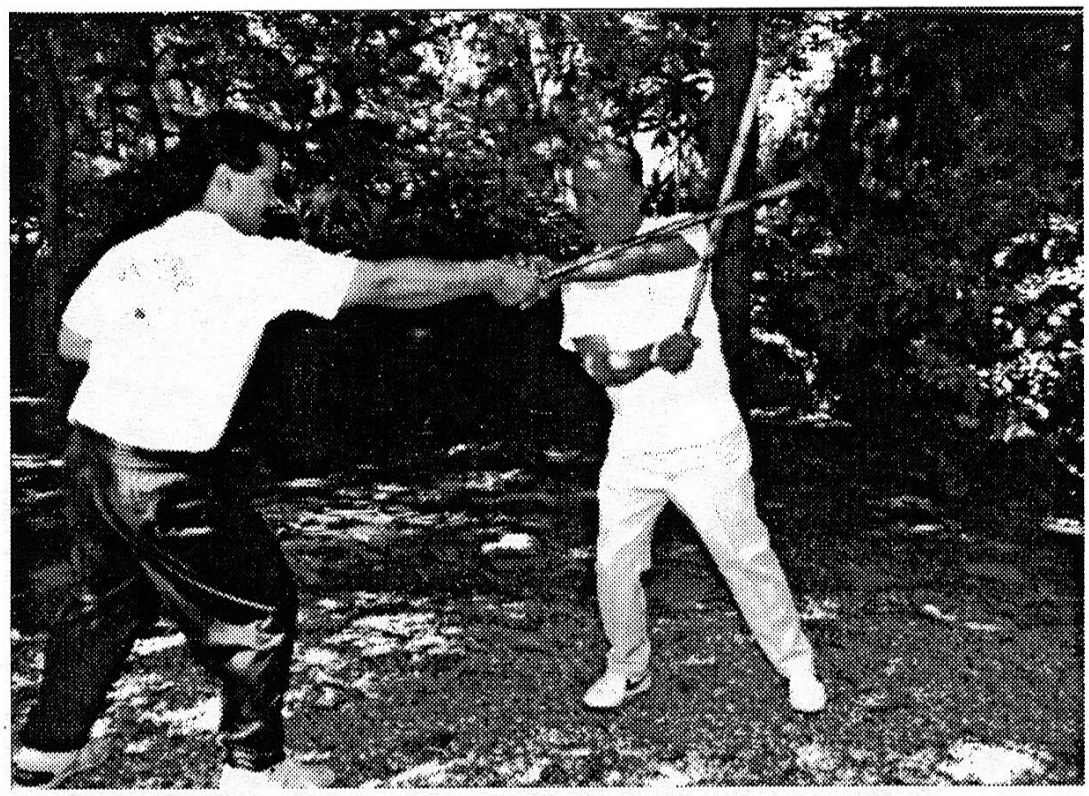


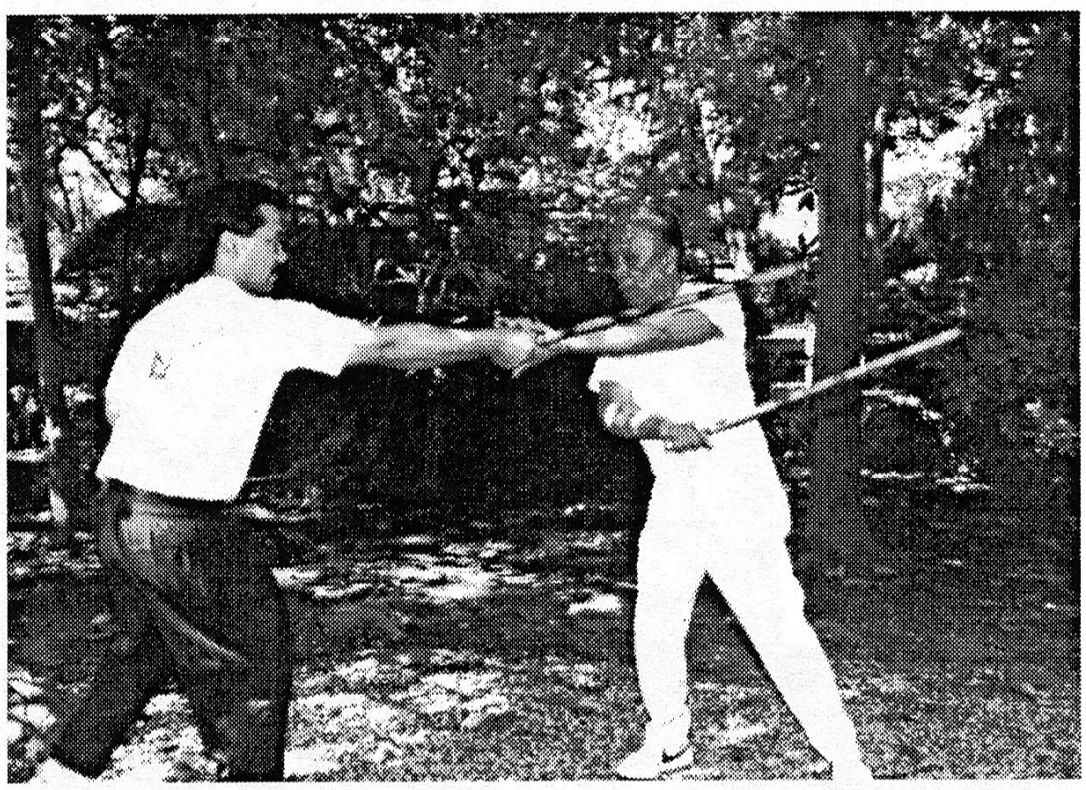
Outside Block

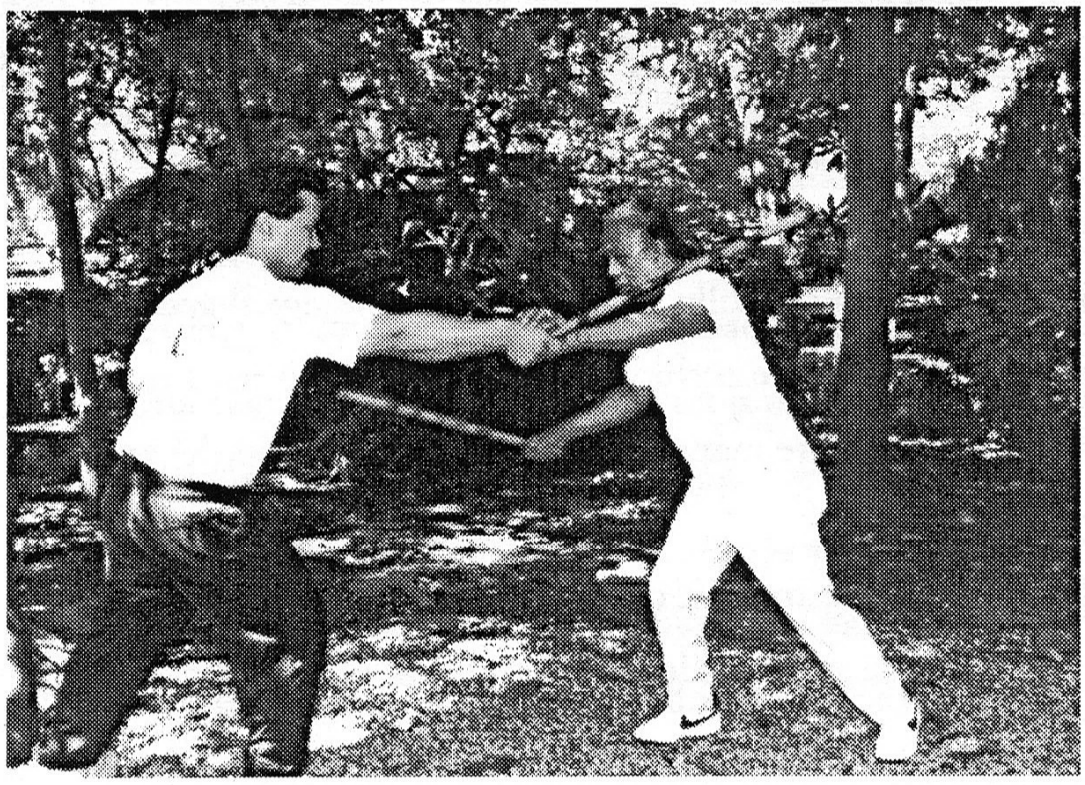


If the duration of the rain fall is brief, or the amount of rain fall is of no great consequence, a mere side fence may be sufficient. Similarly, the simple side block is all that is necessary.

Inside Block







Through the centuries man developed many intricate architectural patterns that improved his ability to build himself a dwelling. As a result of mans never-ending quest to out do his neighbor, towering buildings reached for the sky. Within the walls of many of these there is great beauty provided by those artisans who came from the corners of the earth to market their skills in order to gain wealth and reputation. The art of self defense, with its various artisans, also comes from different sources.

Writers gather material wherever and whenever they can in order to write as comprehensible a work as possible on the weapon art of Escrima. various words from different languages are used to express the concepts that are considered the essence of the art. This is done to attract other martial artists and interested readers with the making of money as its objective.

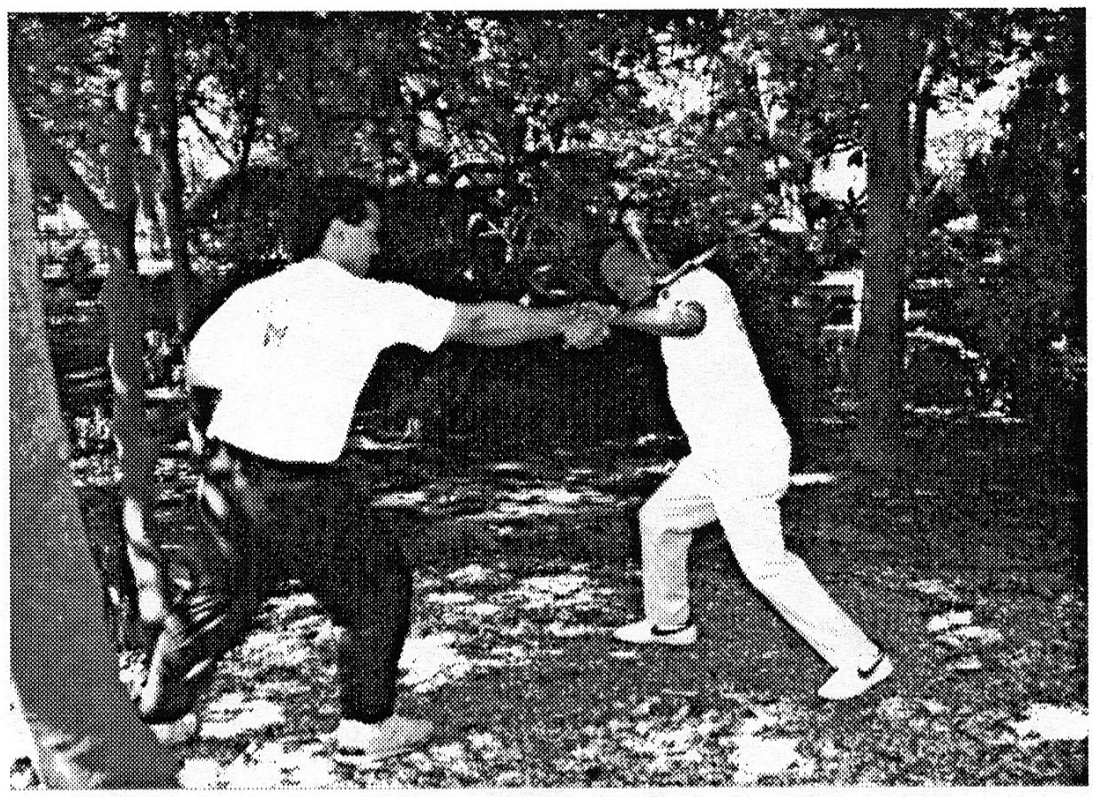
Subjects such as the caves, the shade, the hut that grew into a giant structure, the animals that

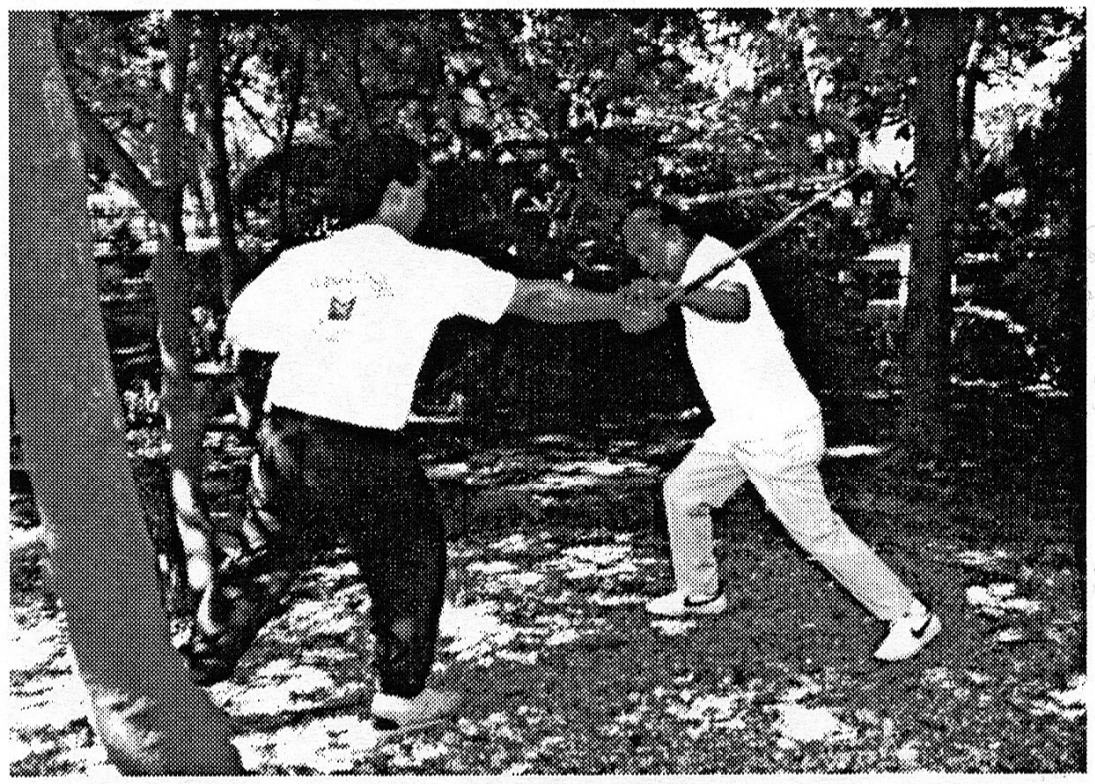
harass man, the elements that exemplify the harshness of mans way, mans temperament and lack of fortitude, all lead to the portrayal of an art. The Filipino weapon art called Escrima.

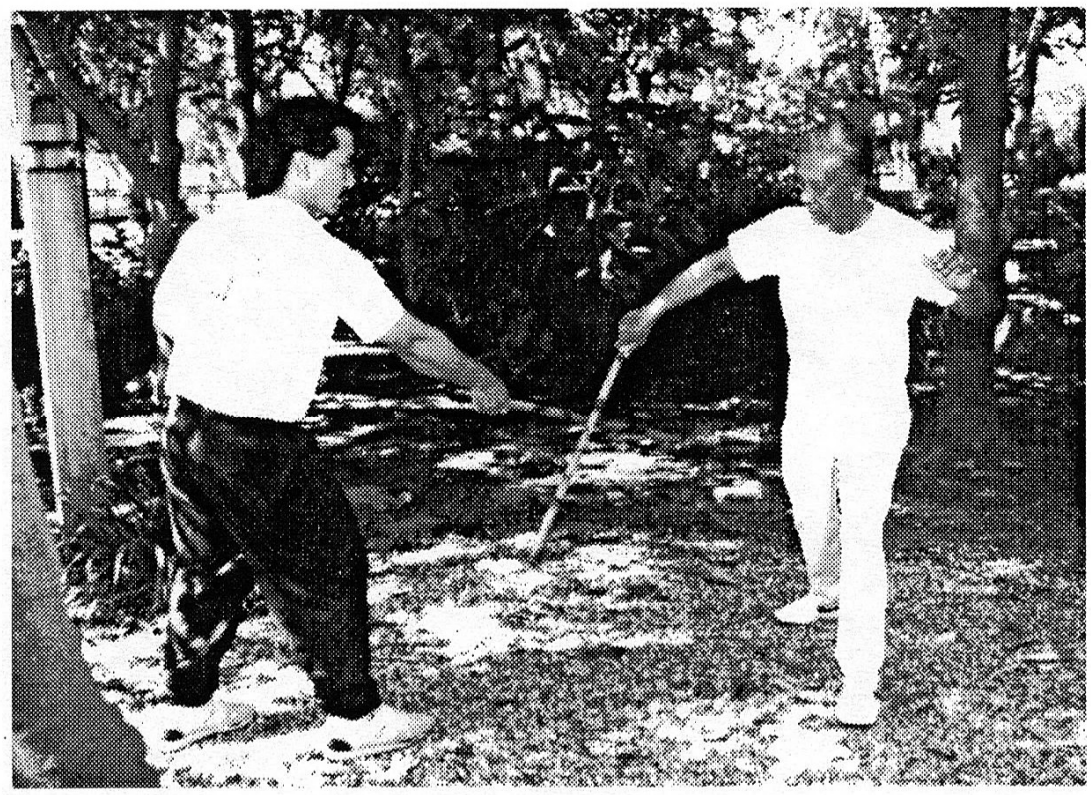
It is the purpose of the author to gradually shape the mind of the reader in-the direction of the Filipino art. It is safe to claim that Escrima is a Filipino art because no other nationality ever used this science of self defense prior to its exposure during a period of 400 years of fierce battles with the Spaniards. There were no firearms during these periods other than a few single shot muskets used by the Spaniards. Those who fought against the Spaniards fought well, and with their single cutting edge bolos they defeated the better equipped opponents. The Spaniards with their metal breast plates, iron armor, and modern large steel swords and muskets, were no match for the cunning and fierce warriors they battled.

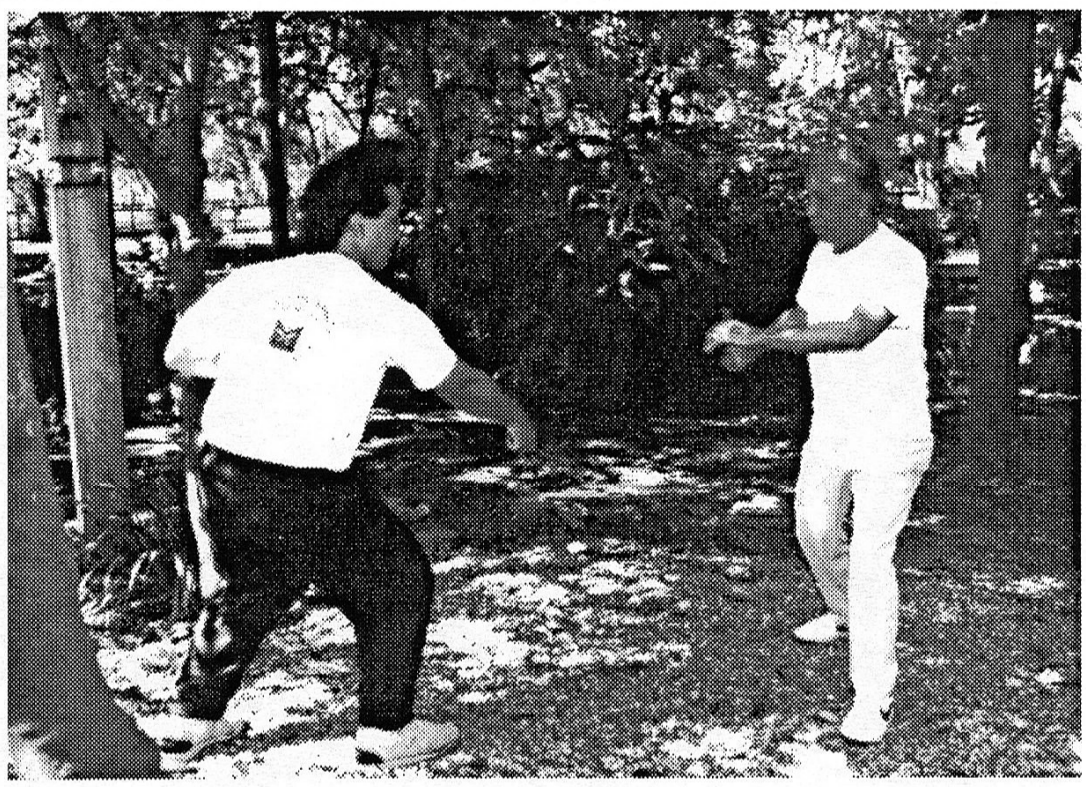
The author, native son of

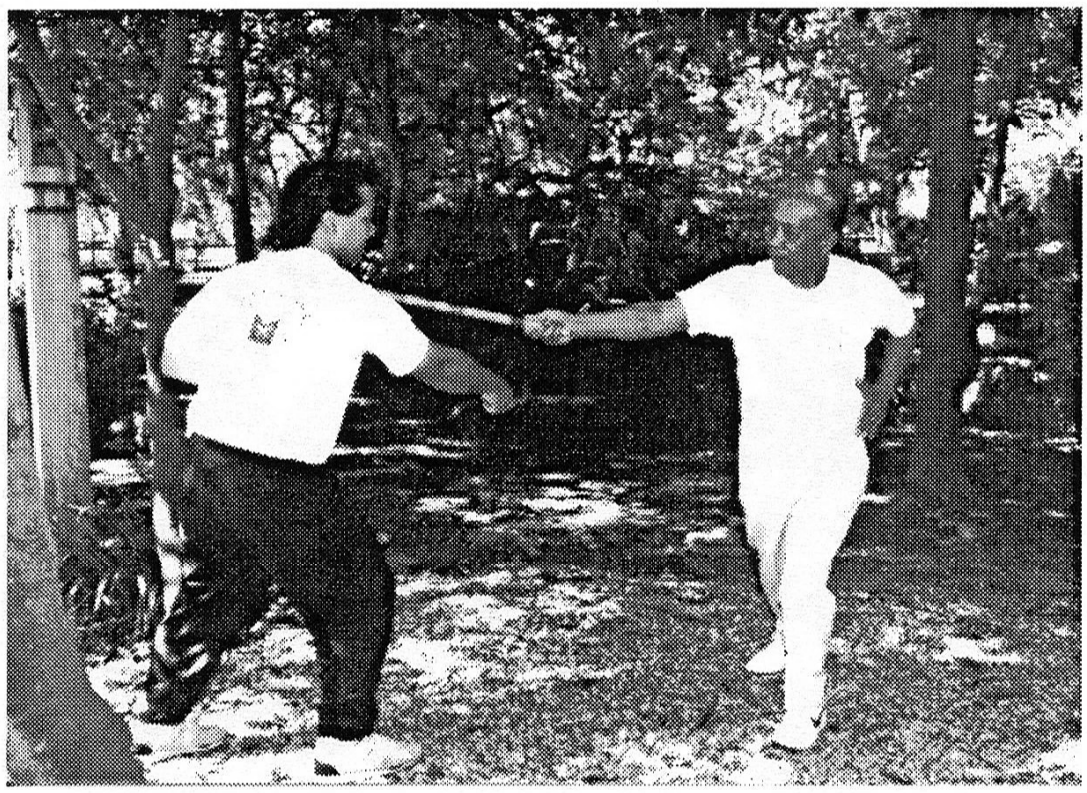
Cross Block











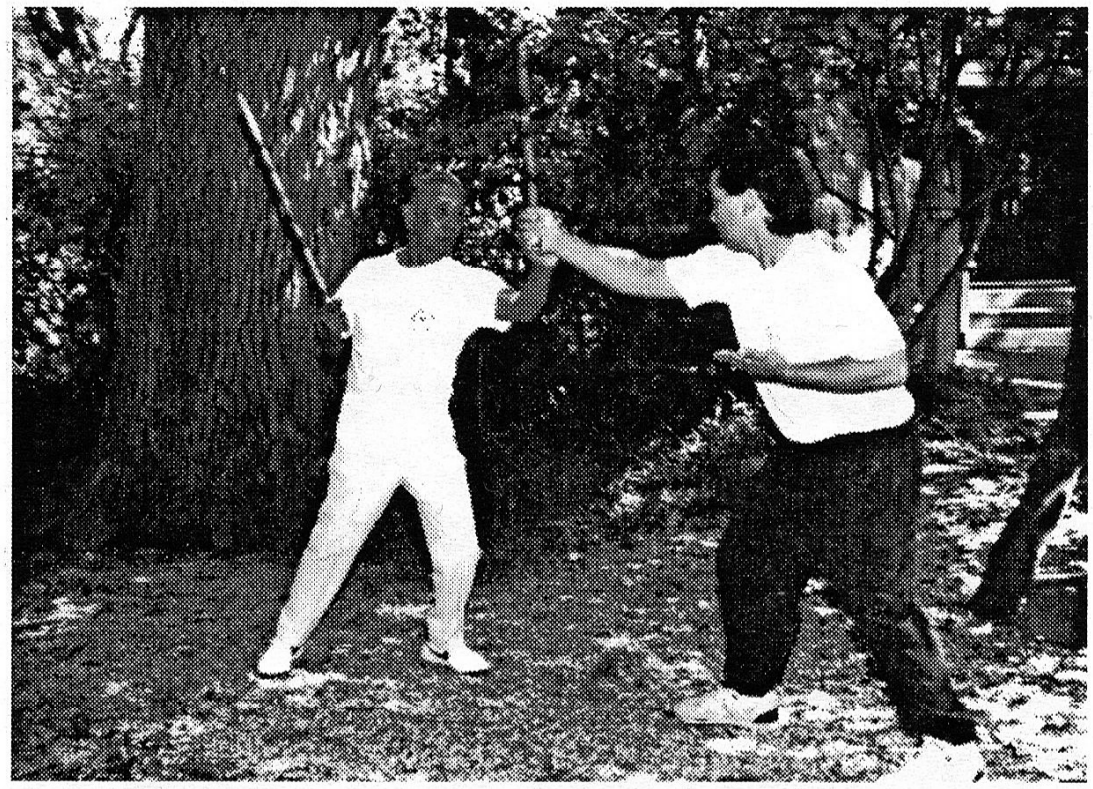
the town of Bayambang, in the province of Pangasinan, Philippines, centers this writing on the revolution staged against the Spaniards in the year 1662, by King Andres Malong. The seat of Malong's kingdom was in the barrio of Binalatongan, in the town of San Carlos, which was located in the province of Pangasinan. (San Carlos is approximately one hour from Bayambang by horse or 15 minutes by today's automobile.)

The reason that this particular rebellion is the focal point of this writing is that the new style of Escrima, what the Ilocano dialect calls Cabaroan, was born here. During these times of adversity and hardship the new concepts evolved eventually became as they are today.

I will relate a story of a portion of the revolution of 1662 as closely and as accurately as it was told to me after being handed down through the generations:

The army of King Malong contained experts in the art of Escrima. They were fast and had

a wealth of experience in tournaments and military combat, and most, it is said, had the battle scars to prove this. Most carried bolos that were anywhere from 18 to 24 inches in length.

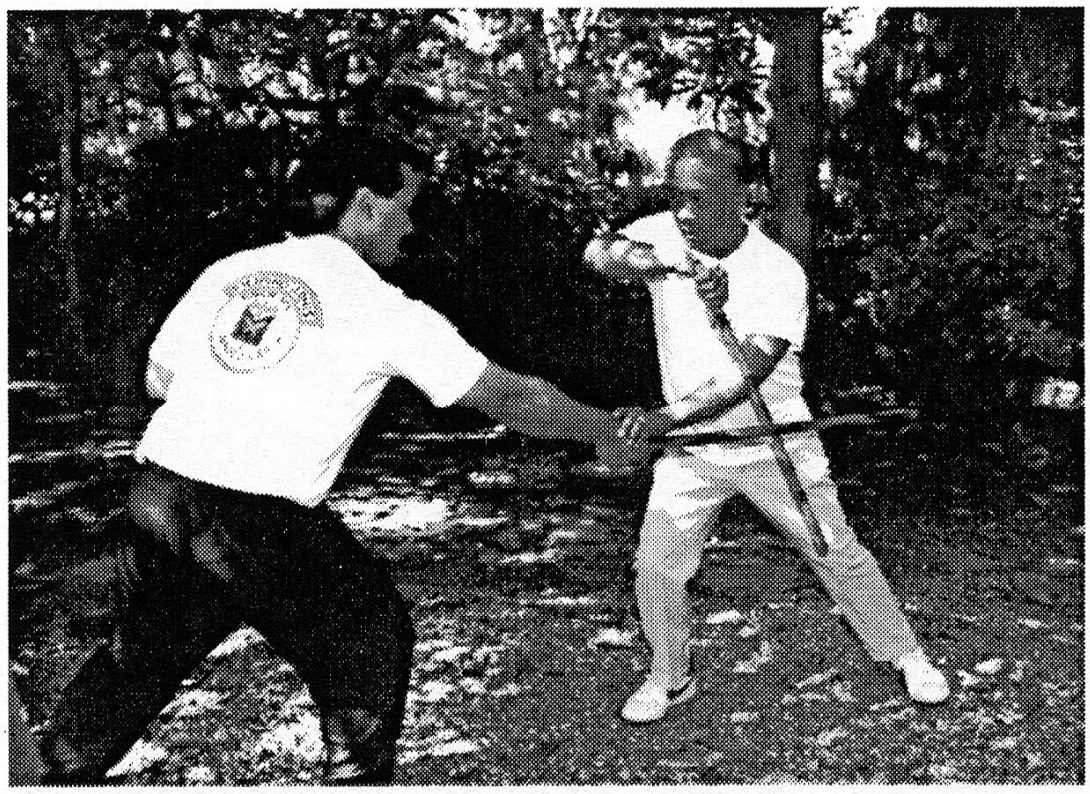


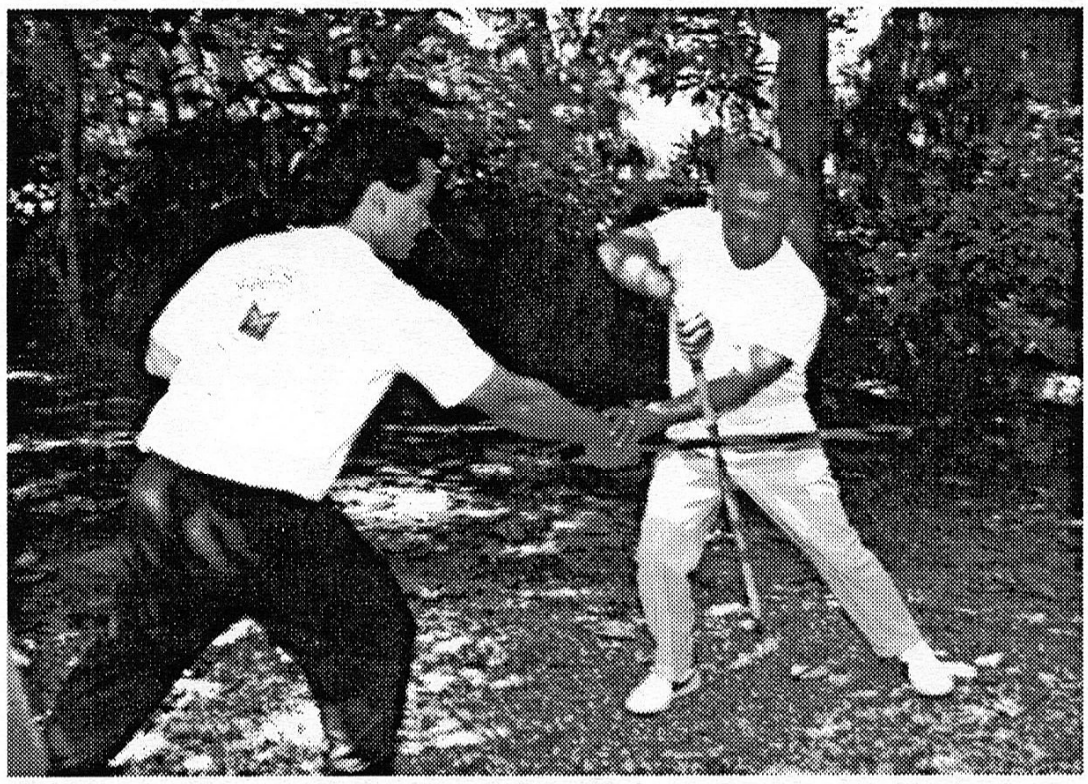
Parrying

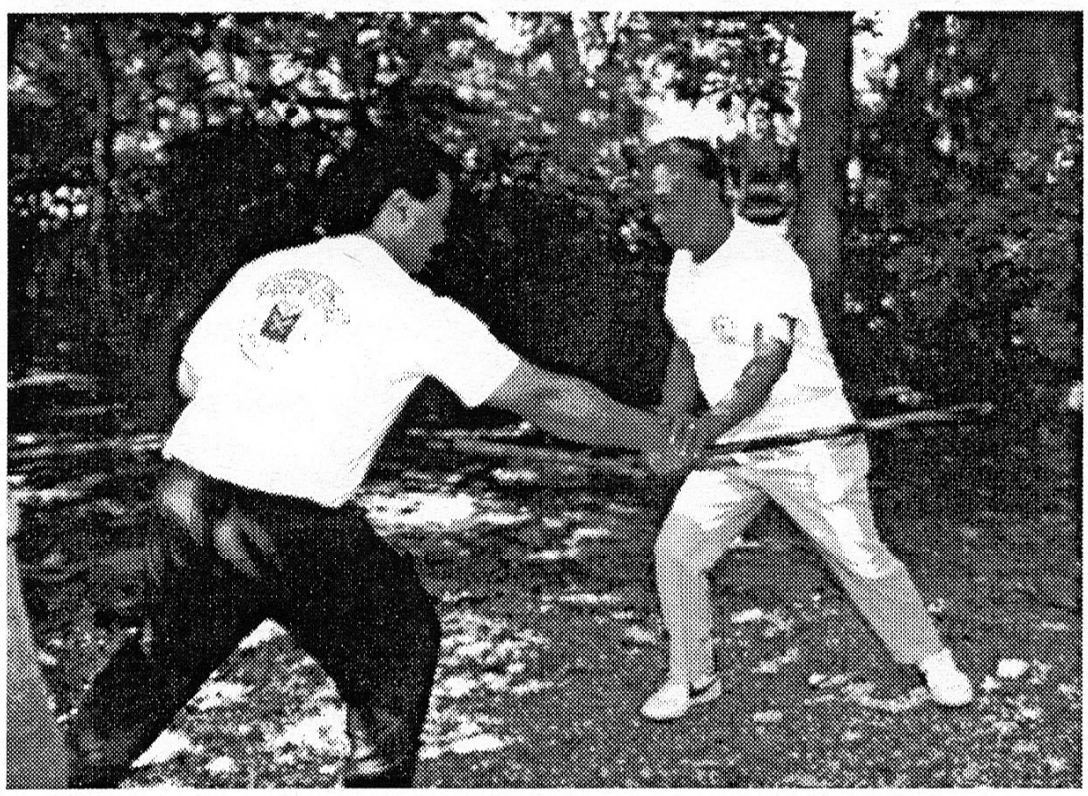
As history reveals, the Spaniards were cruel and disrespectful to the natives and never were concerned about their welfare. The intolerable government in conjunction with the military taking advantage of the people, led King Malong to prepare his army for battle with the Spaniards.

Neighboring provinces provided both men and military supplies and, while the battle ensued, the Spanish authorities contracted Filipinos to fight against Malong and their own country men. Very few Spaniards, only those that were in immediate command, were in the battle fields. Malong was unable to either induct Filipinos for reinforcements or obtain allies as the Spaniards had succeeded in blocking all incoming trails. Eventually, after a couple of years of fighting, Malong's army was crushed. Most of the men died, many surrendered, but a good portion took to the hills. Out of pride, these patriots refused to surrender but, as time went on, conditions worsened. Supplies ran low. Men became restless. Drinking became common, but even that was short-lived, as the supply of liquor eventually ran out.

Side Block







Conditions Changed

The natives eventually became tired of volunteering their food supplies and as a result, the so-called patriots began to rob the neighboring barrios; raping their young women, and killing those who resisted. As more towns were raided the problems increased, yet the Spaniards continued a hands-off policy as long as they were not directly affected. As the years went by the young boys of the area grew. They had witnessed the many misfortunes; they were victims of atrocities at the ages of five or six and now, at sixteen and seventeen, they were in a position to fight back. With the help of veterans these boys learned to fight back. With the help of veterans these boys learned to fight with longer weapons. They used a short blade, about 20 inches long, attached to a handle of approximately the same length. These knives were called Panabas, and were purposely made to chop down bushes and small trees in order to clear virgin soil for farming.

The reason for the extra long handle is to provide enough dis-

tance between the protruding branches and the hands. Chopping is more effective due to the fact that the weight of the Panabas is at the upper half or end of the instrument.

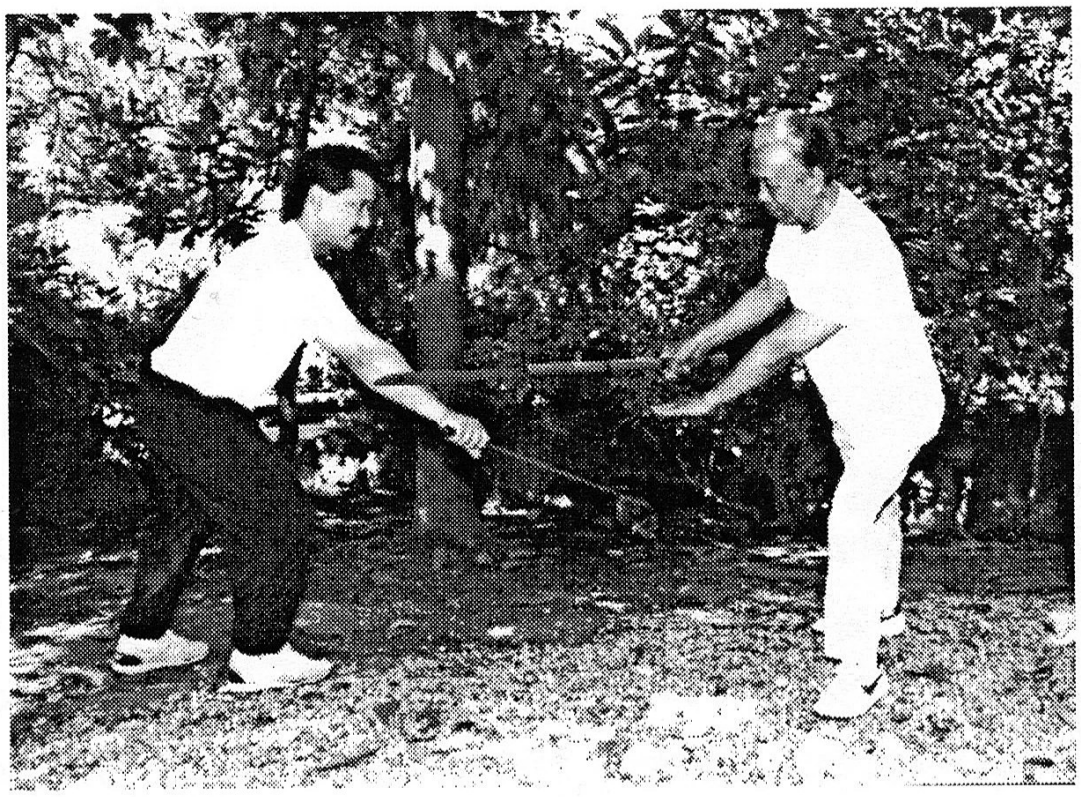
Young Ideas

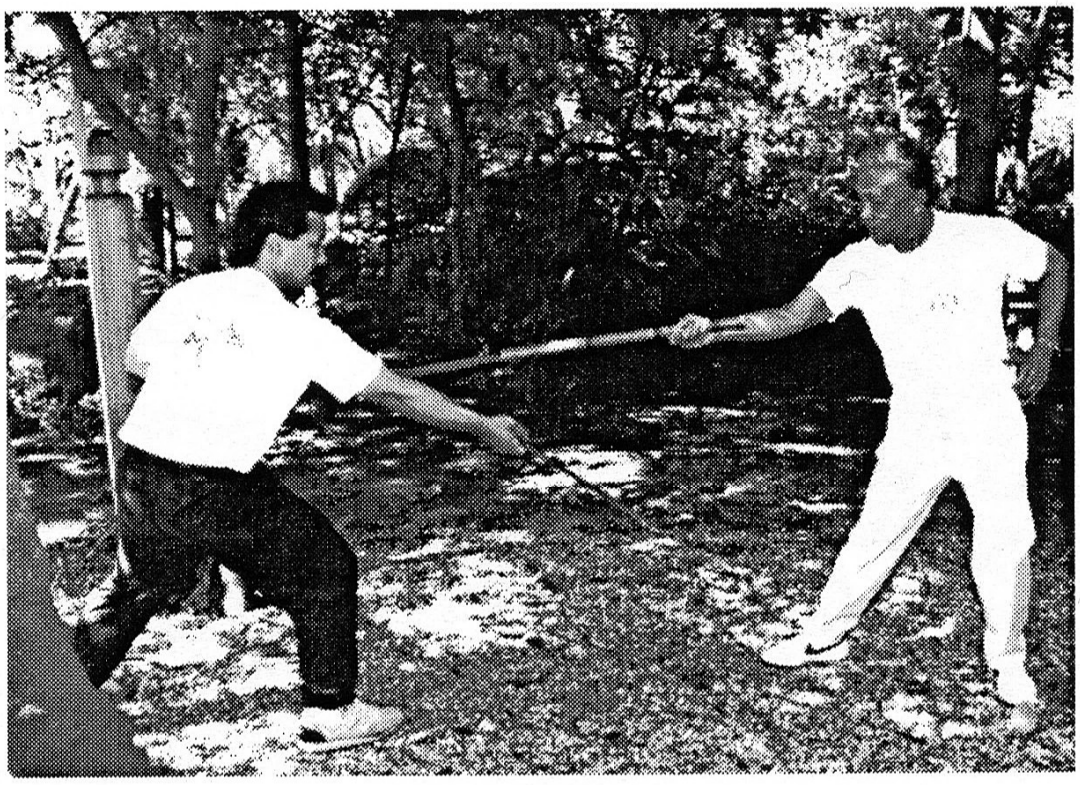
Time had come for this younger generation to induce their comrades to learn this new and exciting style - a new concept. A year passed and it was about the time that the raiders made their annual visit. The training became much more intense. They practiced during moonlit nights or with light provided by primitive lanterns and torches. A sentry was always placed at the far end of the trail to provide a warning in the event that unfamiliar intruders came by. The boys became confident that their new style would out do the renegades. Soon these young warriors would meet the veterans. The new would test the old.

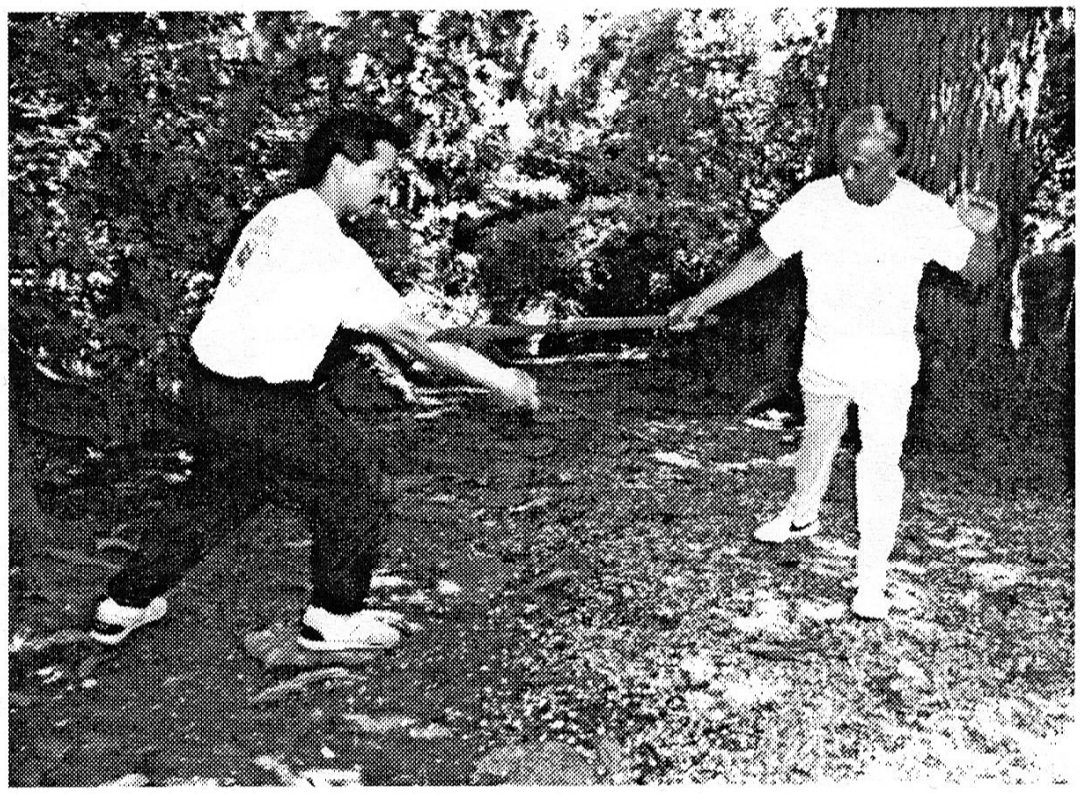
The Final Test

The hour long-awaited for finally arrived. There was mixed

Panabas







emotion among the young men. Some were calmer and confident while others were eager and chattering. Their teachers hushed them saying "calma, calma, distancia mas distancia."

The boys were dispersed behind coconut trunks and bushes, while the reserves hid under houses. As the raiders entered the village, the dogs barked furiously sensing the dangerous nature of these men. Their commanders were on horse back while the rest entered on foot. The audible command tingled into the ears, flataque - ataque -, distancia - distancia -." Bolos were drawn and steel met steel with sparks filling the air. Men slumped with their final cry. Some screamed, "retira - retira," and the gaps closed. Every possible route of escape was guarded. In one hour the screaming of women and children subsided. The mothers ran in frenzy to see if their young warriors - their sons - were safe. Some had minor injuries, while a few were more seriously hurt. All in all a victory had been achieved. The old men and women led the burial detail, and the young ladies provided food, while the warriors checked their weapons, honed some of the chips, and washed away the blood stains.

The Scale of Justice

The Spanish authorities came down to find out what had occurred and were pleased to see that the bandidos who had created so many disturbances in practically all the villages were eliminated. They were the remainder of the once revolutionary forces, so their defeat provided good reason for Spanish approval. A few of the ranking officers were amazed with the long Panabas that were used to defeat the former patriots. The commandante measured quarinta polgadas, quatro pies, - muy bien; mano largo, - esta bien.

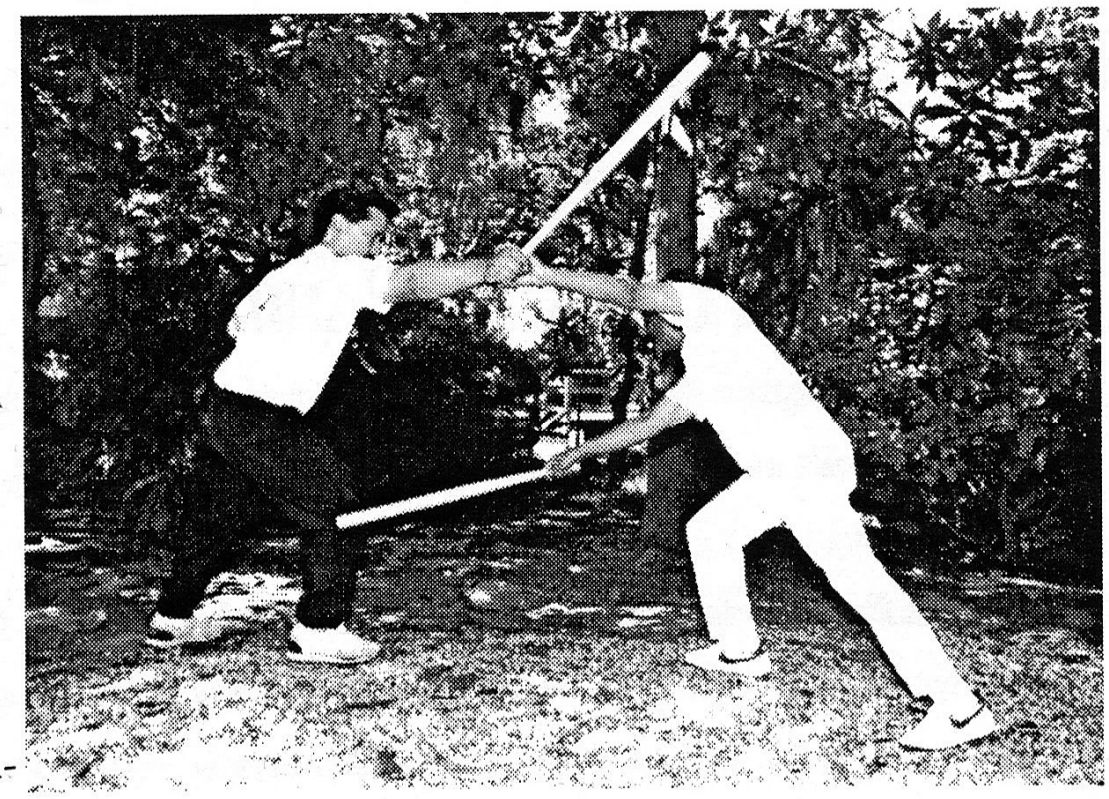
The year went by and peace prevailed, but the new style of fighting continued to be used. It was now called Larga Mano, the simplified and safe style. News traveled fast and the neighboring provinces heard about it. The ban on Escrima that had been put into effect long ago was never lifted but the authorities were reluctant to put pressure on the villagers to stop since the victory over the former patriots brought praise to the local authorities from provincial and local governments.

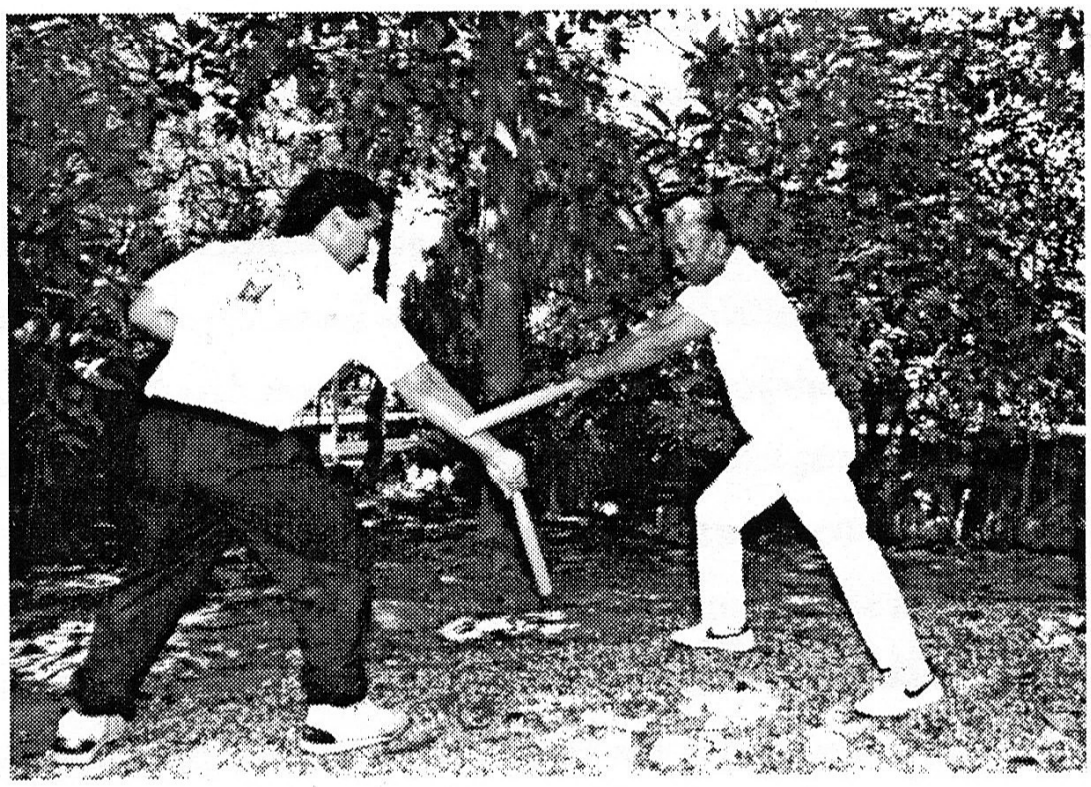
The Final Crusade

The years went by and the hardship that was common under military rule persisted; however, the people persevered. The final revolution was fought in the year 1896. it took the unified efforts of

all the citizens to attain their freedom. A secret organization called Kataastaasan, Kagalanggalang, Katipunan, (KKK), the highest and most respected of organization was formed. This secret organization was founded by certain venerable citizens, true patriot, known as the 13 Illustries. Their plan was carefully implemented and finally, out of many hard struggles, much bloodshed and adversity, freedom was born. The Filipino flag flew in Malolos for about 8 months. However, faith once more dimmed and the preparation for a new and free government was obstructed.

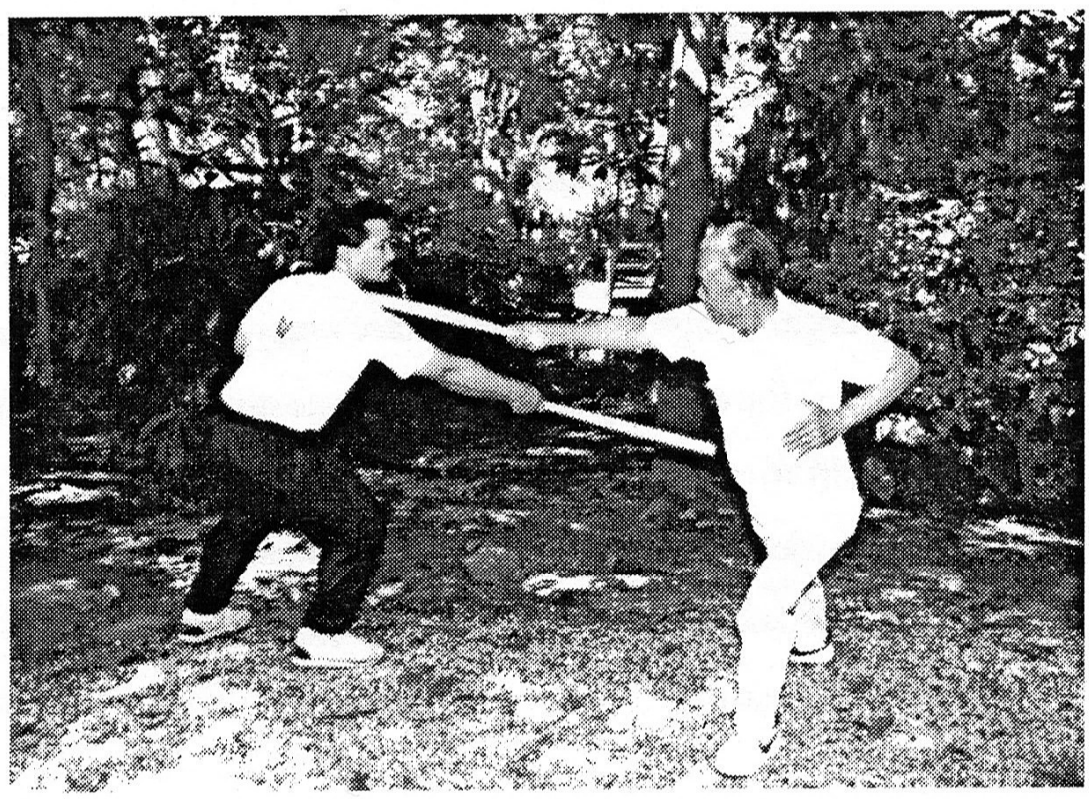
Larga Mano





The Wilted Hope

The colonizing Americans led by Admiral George Dewey, fought the Spanish Navy in Manila Bay, crushing the Spanish Armada. After several years of fighting with the Spanish, the Filipinos were again forced to fight to keep their flag of freedom waving. The Veteranos dela Revolucion and Defensores de la Libertad were pressed into battle once more. These weak militias



were low on supplies and man power but nevertheless, fought ferociously.

Democracy Playing Its Hand

The Americans proved to be better rulers for they were kind to the people. Immediately, schools were built and children were encouraged to be educated. In no time, the youngsters were speaking English.

The Escrimadores presented their arts to these new American governors, assuring them that it was effective against the Castillans. The Americans quickly won the friendship of the people because they were more liberal. They looked into the difficulties of the people and endeavored to improve conditions when it was possible. By now, the veterans did not fear the sight of the white man. It was no longer necessary to summon the rest of the villagers to draw their bolos and throw themselves into a skirmish with the cry, "anack ng bukid somilang kayo" (arise, sons of the east). This time the art of Escrima was no longer banned since the Americans carried the Enfield rifle and Escrima cannot out do firearms. Escrima became one of the many sports, cipa and cock fighting being the most popular, while Escrima was secondary. Second, because at the time there was no gear to protect against injuries. This is why only the best went into the arena for national competitions. Women competed only in local contests.

The Champions

The new stars of the art demonstrated their prowess under the lime lights. The arena in the city of Dagupan, Pangasinan, was the most common place to prove oneself. These fights took place immediately after World War I. Santiago Toledo was the star outshining all other competitors of the time. Toledo was a native of the town of Binalonan, Pangasinan, but because of his reputation and popularity he was forced to reside in Dagupan to be immediately available when and if there was a challenge. Escrima competitions took place every day of the week except Sunday which was the day that was reserved for cock fighting. Toledo was not only the champion, he was also the big maestro.

There were other champions in neighboring communities but they were not able to beat Toledo. There was a good practitioner by the name of Francisco Garcia from the nearby town of Calasiao, Pangasinan. There was also a young contender by the name of Juan Gombay from the town of Bani, Pangasinan. Many old Filipinos believed that Toledo was invincible. They believed

that he was endowed with supernatural powers, for he could stretch farther than any of his challengers and contemporaries. They said that he had the stretching ability of an earthworm or a night crawler. It was thought that he may have befriended the Prince of these creatures and out of merit he earned his unusual ability. Filipinos are ones for believing Anting-Antings. It stands to reason that Toledo remained a champion because of this reputation. No one wanted to fight this idol. An Escrimador fighting for the crown needed to fix his mind to believe that he would not be injured; that he would win; that, for him, there was no such thing as Anting-Anting. "Come what may" "Bahala Na" - must be his slogan.

As the years passed and Toledo was passing his prime, a young man was born in the neighboring province of La Union. He emerged in the sea port of Aparri, in the province of Cagayan. Although this lad was born in a western town, due to the profession of his father, he grew up in the northeastern corner of Luzon. His father owned a sea-faring Banka, a sail boat that transported cargoes by sea from one port to another. Because he had to go to school like the rest of the children, he was forced to stay ashore. While, at times, going aboard with his father however, he met a lot of men with different abilities in self defense. A few of them were residents of the town of Aparri. Now a growing lad, Dalmacio Bergonia took interest in the art. While in public school he was teased about the black and blue marks that he had receive when he was unable to ward off oncoming blows. But these marks did not bother him; he claimed that he did not feel the impact - they did not hurt him. The forceful blows delivered by an adult should have been sufficient to disable and maim him, but the growing boy was impervious to their force - no bones were broken. Again, the word got out that Bergonia had inherited from his grandfather an Anting-Anting. They believed that he had the nature of a dried coconut husk since with the exception of a bladed weapon no Filipino weapon could hurt him. The stick would bounce off him and leave him unharmed. Dalmacio had many years of experience and had developed several styles due to his acquaintances with those of various skills and techniques. At the height of his strength and skill, Delmacio took the crown. There was no age restriction on fighters for the title at that time. At this time many young Filipinos were conscripted to work at the sugar plantation in Hawaii. most of his contemporaries were enticed into traveling to this land of opportunity. Bergonia remained and continued to teach Escrima in Aparri. This champion was famous for that which became a fad among a few the double stick style, then called the Macabebe style.

The Art Migrated to a Foreign Land

Several of Bergonia's contemporaries met other experts in Hawaii, among those who had come from different parts of the Philippines. One expert, one of the few graduate students of Bergonia, also migrated to Hawaii. His name was Flaviano Vergara, who hailed from the town of Santa Cruz, in the province of Ilocos Sur. Flaviano also learned the life of a sea-faring man. He served in a banka as a chief and one of his responsibilities was to determine how many sails were to be hoisted in order to outrun the other bankas, thus getting to the nearest and best docks in port. Side-swiping a boat, often resulted in serious fights and Flaviano was familiar with these experiences. This quiet and well mannered man had several tests in skill, speed, and courage while in Hawaii. He was never hit.

The Cultivation of Knowledge

I had the rare opportunity of working with Vergara in a prune orchard in 1929. This was in the little town of Meridian west of Yuba City, California. I was the bookkeeper in the farm labor and harvesting operation and as the season progressed Flaviano took interest in imparting some of his knowledge in self defense. We played far away from the camp since Flaviano would not teach in the presence of another person. He was very careful to see that no one should acquire his rare knowledge and represent it in a way that might discredit him. He despised braggarts and disapproved of impatience. His slogan was: There's a time for everything." He preferred not to be known as an expert and, thus be able to enjoy the serenity of a peaceful life without wondering when and where a challenge would come from. Once Flaviano raised his eyebrows and confided in me the following: "Young man, not because I myself is telling you instead of another, but the way I figure and the way I feel, I think the challenger that will beat me is not yet born." As my training went on with he detected that my movement demonstrated some knowledge in the art. He modestly queried: "Will you honestly tell me if you have had any training from any teacher before?" I was being tested not only in my knowledge of escrima, but in honesty and full confidence of my teacher. I replied, "I doubt if you know them!" Flaviano retorted. "yes" I replied, "them." The first was a drunkard but a very good fighter nonetheless by the name of Benito Junio. Then there was my cousin Julian Bundoc who graduated from the same teacher. Then there was a man named

Fructuso Junio who drew the line between the cabaroan (new) and cada-anan (old). "Is that all" the teacher replied. I nodded my head. In a very low voice he sighed, "at least you are honest."

Discipline and Training

Vergara was very critical of how I placed my feet. An over indulgent and aggressive right hand fighter can, if he lacks control, cut his own leg if he persists in placing his left foot forward. Most especially when the delivery comes down from the upper right. A right handed fighter should endeavor to place his right foot forward at all times. "There may be a few exceptions, but experience tells me, "Vergara would say, "that it is safer and more important that your reaching not be impaired." The left hand practitioner should follow the reverse.

Vergera's second instruction was, "Never be too eager to win a bout before you are certain what style your opponent will launch against you." He continued, "It pays to have the knowledge of more than one style so that you can choose the one that is the most appropriate without jeopardizing your safety." He explained that the fighter should have the knowledge of two distinct styles: the old and the new - the close quarter combat, and the distant and safe style.

His third instruction was, "I advocate the quiet type of escrimador. Do you know why? Let me tell you. If you have a loose mouth so that your tongue does not stop waggling, the time will come when you will be over-indulgent and brag about what you know. Continually you will try to make others believe that you are really good and that you were never defeated in the arena. True or false, one day there will be one who will have the courage to respond to your incessant challenges. You will be force to stand behind your exuberance. Since you made all the noises you will have to be the aggressor, and this is the exact opposite of the principle that I put forth. I would rather be challenged and play the part of a defender and apply the waiting technique. Every man has the urge and strong desire to be famous; many will stop at nothing to pursue this inclination to be well-known. However, one who is well-disciplined and realizes this fact, which I have, is learning purely SELF DEFENSE. I did not offer to teach you so that you would become an aggressor. That is why my method of teaching limits you to no more than your own defense. Your trainer will strike and if you do not defend yourself you will get hurt. You do not counter-strike but you may simulate this. This is the difference between this style, De Fondo, which is your base, and the Larga Mano, which is the opposite extreme. some will say your De Fondo is boring for it is not

fluid. Certainly, it is patterned for that purpose. It is up to the student after graduation to continually conceive of ways to fill the gaps - the space between the two extremes."

PARTING

Years went by and each of us followed the fruit seasons to different farm communities. Flaviano did not come back to Meridian nor any other fruit orchard I worked in. I remained in Yuba and Sutter counties working in the peach, plum, and prune orchards. The thought of Escrima rarely came to my mind, in fact it was beginning to fade away. The knowledge remained but the lack of another enthusiast to spar with allowed the art to become an imbedded in the self.

WORLD WAR II

Twelve years later, on December 7th, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Practically every Filipino was inducted into the army. I was a farmer in Imperial Valley at the time and was considered essential on the home front. Eventually, in October of 1942, I was permitted to join the service. I was first stationed at Camp San Luis Obispo, and then in the winter of the same year I was transferred to Fort Ord. Prior to Thanksgiving, I encountered a man appearing to be a new recruit walking near the local theater. I looked twice because of the Toscani cigar I saw in his mouth and the shabby sort of walk that I thought I recognized. Flaviano, I said to myself; it's got to be him; no one else walks that way. Because of his rigid training in Escrima, both feet pointed in opposite directions to facilitate the shifting of the weight of the body to either side. When we recognized each other our faces gladdened. He had been inducted two weeks earlier to Regimental Headquarters and I was stationed with company G annex.

The following weekend every soldier was given passes to Salinas to see their girl friends or relatives. Everyone hated to stay at the base for there was nothing to see but G.I.'s. Flaviano visited the barracks and we talked about the past. He asked if I still remembered what he had taught me. It had been a long time since the two of us had worked together. We cut a couple of old broom handles and we worked out between the bunks. It didn't take long for me to pick up some of the things that were a bit rusty. More swinging and a little training was added every night. During week days, after dinner, everyone changed into their class "c" uniform and met in the rec hall or the PX. Flaviano and I trained and between drills we would talk. Sometimes a soldier would come

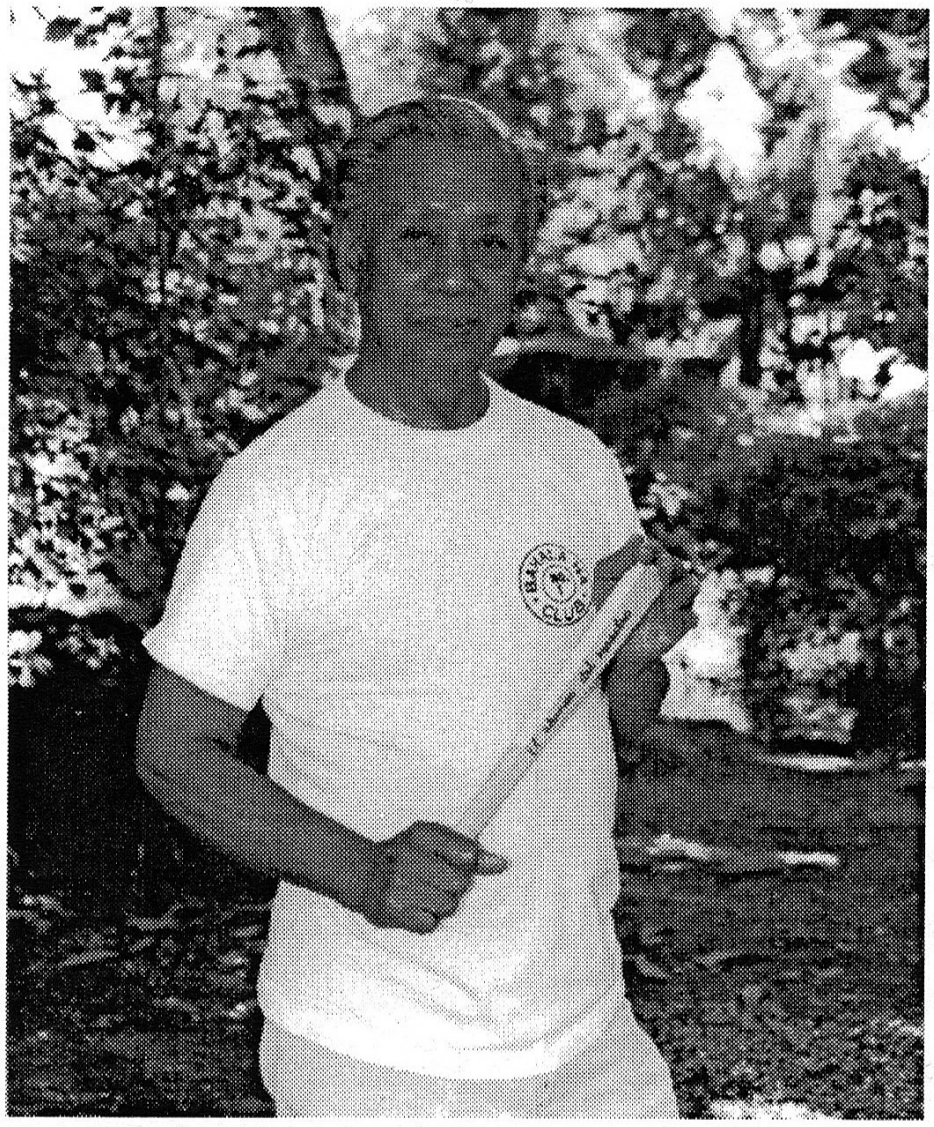
back and ask what we were doing. Some would tell us that they would never come close to a Samurai sword. They claimed they would give the Samurai a load of their M-1.

Weeks went by and Flaviano and I did nothing but drill and drill. on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, I received my first stripe and I rushed to sew it on my uniform. I received the highest score on the .22 caliber range. Flaviano and I went to the recreation hall to show off my first stripe. I sort of walked side ways to show off the stripe. Someone jested, "Hey, hey. Look at the general. He earned his first turkey wishbone. You'll go to work now."

PREMONITION

The year was close to its end. As our discussions of various subjects progressed, Flaviano said with sincerity, "I'm glad that you took interest in learning the art because at least you have something to remember me by. I have a feeling (he then placed his hand on his chest) that I am not going to come out of this war." I told him that he was crazy. He assured me that when he had this feeling in the past he was able to alter his plans and avert what he suspected what was going to happen. He claimed that this had always worked but this time, since he was in the service, he would have to change their plans and this was not possible. Flaviano said to me, "now you listen to me very carefully. Like I told you, your training is the only memento of our friendship, and I want you to treasure it. Do you remember What I told you about the two extremes of your art? The base is the De Fondo, a close quarter combat style while the Larga Mano uses distance and is the safer of the two. You must be very happy that you have the two because you can tell the difference between the old and the new." I nodded my head admittingly and he said to me, "Suppose someone presented to you a style totally strange to you. You do not recognize it as the old or the new. What are you going to do?"

"Is there such a thing," I asked, as my curiosity was peaking. "Are there anymore?" He smiled and took a piece of my writing paper and folded it to make it into a crude-looking fan. Pointing at the left end he said, "this is your old style." He then pointed to the right side and said, "this is your new style. How about these in the middle? These are the unexpected, and this is why a master must be able to fill these gaps. These are the "master's secrets" and I entrust them to you. I have held them from you for many years but now they are yours as a remembrance of me.



REQUIEM TO MY MASTERS

The year ended and on January 2nd, my regiment moved to Camp Cooke and Flaviano's moved to Camp Beale. I never saw him again. I heard when I was in Milne Bay, New Guinea that Flaviano's outfit was in Oro Bay which was on the other side of New Guinea. Before I was shipped to the Philippines from Australia, on August 18, 1944, I learned that Flaviano was killed in a dynamite explosion. It was not a Japanese bullet that killed him, it was dynamite. I never found out the exact details of how and why this happened. My friend was gone, my Master who gave me his treasure of knowledge', THE SECRET OF A MASTER in the art of Escrima.

OVERSEAS

I was shipped out of New Guinea to Australia on January 10, 1944, to a place called Camp X. It was close to the little town of Beau Desert and about 60 miles from the sea port of Brisbane in Queensland. It was here that I furthered my training in Morse code, cryptography, visual communication, etc.. I also embarked on my final training in jungle warfare in a place called Canungra. Thirteen weeks of hard training con-

tributed to my ability in climbing the high mountains of the Philippines. At this point I was a Staff Sergeant.

On August 10, 1944 I was ordered to a briefing at the General's Headquarters. The five-star General crossed his arms and said, "boys, I selected you to do a job that a general can't do. You have the training to do a job that no one else can do. You are going home to our country, the Philippines - yours and my homeland. You'll serve as my eyes, my ears, and my fingers, and you'll keep me informed of what the Japanese are doing. You will tell me how to win this war by furnishing me with this information which I could not obtain in any other way. Good luck, and there will be shining bars waiting for you in Manila.

The Final Test

At dawn on August 12, 1944, we waved farewell to the general and the rest of the military big shots and in the evening we were in Fort Darwin. The US. submarine Sting Ray was waiting for us and the sailors looked at us incredulously and said, "is it really that bad?" We were armed to the teeth. We had carbines, sub machine guns, side arms, .45 caliber automatics, bolo knives, trench knives, brass knuckles, and 38 caliber silencers. our ammunition was loaded ahead of us in special packages.

While enroute to the Philippines we slept on our own cargo boxes. Myself and one other soldier slept under the torpedo racks. One night the sub was, rumbling a bit more than usual so I asked one of the sailors what was going on. He told me that the sub had been fired upon and had to out maneuver the torpedoes at full speed. This occurred near the Halmahera Island on the Celebes Sea.

In Philippine Waters

The sub traveled around the eastern and western side of Luzon while looking for a good landing area. Captain Loomis suggested that we disembark at Daluperi Island, one of the many islands in the Batanes group, about 20 miles north of Luzon. We had reports that there were about 10,000 Japanese on the island so we politely told the captain to drop us anywhere in Luzon as long as it had Philippine soil.

On August 28th, they found a little beach on the northern tip of Luzon, took some scouting pictures of the area and then decided to land there. It was Caonayan Bay, and during that

night we left the sub and made our way to it. The sub was forced to wait for nightfall at a depth of 210 feet. We had been spotted by radar and a plane was dropping depth charges on us. They came close enough to rattle the sub and burst some pipes but luckily this was the extent of the damage. By night fall the Japanese planes gave up but we still had some difficulties to contend with. There were problems due to the passing of a large Japanese convoy bringing troops and supplies to Leyte where the Americans had landed 8 days earlier. A little rubber boat that carried a few of our supplies and propaganda equipment had a hard time going over and through the giant waves that the big ships created. Two rubber boats full of cargo went ashore while 10 men stayed in the sub. The lieutenant and myself and three other men went ahead on trial boats and only two of the 15 tons of cargo were unloaded. It was getting too hot and Captain Loomis said via the walkie talkie that the sub had to leave. He told me that they would wait if we wanted to turn back and I replied, "We are in our homeland now; no thank you; we will stay."

I'm cutting out many of the details in the complicated landing but there is one more story to tell. At the mouth of the river that emptied into the sea was a house that had been seized by a Japanese patrol which had been retrieving floating cargo from a Japanese boat that had been sunk by a British submarine the day before. A detachment about 2 squads patrolled the beach on this moonlit night. We had 2 tons of cargo hidden behind green bushes above the beach where also we sought to hide. As the head of the Japanese column entered the village we occupied, 15 submachine guns opened fire. Fifteen Japanese were hit and the rest escaped. A few of us were forced to take out our bolo knives and make sure no one was left to tell who had attacked them. civilians came to help dig shallow graves on the beach and an old man harnessed his carabao to drag a dried limb of a tree to erase our tracks on the beach.

The following afternoon, a couple of waves of Japanese soldiers entered the barrio. Some of the civilians were beaten and asked about the attack on the Japanese soldiers. They answered that it was guerrillas that had attacked. We watched this through binoculars on a knoll overlooking the village. The civilians were smart not to reveal the landing of American commandos.

The slogan of our battalion was Bahala Na (Come what may!), which suggested that we were brave, but we were all scared. Our first initiation in blood made us feel guilty and remorseful. We had seen war in the movies but it was a lot different when we were in it ourselves.

Intangible Power

We left the beach on August 29th, and I was introduced to Anting-Anting, the supernatural power I had always heard about.

Old man Pablo, one of the senior villagers was asked by the barrio chief to go ahead and perform his special rituals. His instructions to us were to follow him, keep absolutely quite, and not to mind anything we saw on the trail. "Do not look around," he said. In order not to break loose from the column, we were told to grab a handful of luminous mushrooms growing between the rotten leaves. We held it behind our backs so the man behind us could see and keep pace with us. We went through a swamp with water about a foot deep and we could see pairs of eyes when we turned on our flash lights. They were crocodiles, the nearest to the trail was about 5 feet long and the largest was around 6 feet. We passed through the swamp and barrio. With as many houses and dogs that there were, one would think that the entire neighborhood would have been alarmed and awakened. The Japanese headquarters was at the second house on the trail entering the village. old man Pablo stood by the side, let us by and said in our dialect, "keep on and don't look back." The old man had an almost burned out candle still lit which we were informed later was used in the ritual. How did he hide our presence to the dogs, geese, and ducks that were in the village? What power accomplished this? Their barrio chief that came up to show us where to hide told us Pablo could always be relied upon in tight situations.

We penetrated deeper into the jungle to a higher elevation. This was necessary first to avoid Japanese patrols and get better radio reception, and second, to have access to other non-Christian natives. With them, we could barter for sweet potatoes with our extra GI. shirts. Money was unimportant to them since they rarely got into town.

A Test of Stamina

On August 29th, we left the beach. The boys from the village and the chief transported our 2 tons of cargo a portion at a time each night to our hiding place. our radio communications were going well and two months later on October 12th, we were contacted by our agent. We were told that the 15th Infantry Regiment Philippine Army was on its way to clean out spies in the northern communities. Our agents made contact with their commanders so they would forego the mission

of cleaning out the spies and collaborators. Instead they escorted us to the General Headquarters of Northern Luzon. On October 13th, we followed the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) trail and three days later arrived in the town of Manabo, in the province of Abra. The 15th Infantry Philippine Army commanded by Captain John O'Day could not go beyond Manabo for this was the sector controlled by the 121st Infantry Regiment commanded by Major Barnett.

Before we got to Manabo we stopped in several communities. We traveled through the towns of Peddig, Dingras Ilocos Norte, and also Banna where we found two spies, a man and a woman. We knew that the man was a spy because he was wearing a brand new silk shirt and in time of war no one could afford to buy such an item. They arrested him right away and found a little booklet which identified him as a UN.(United Nippong). He was murdered on the spot. After the party and town meeting that we called at every town, a beautiful young girl was asked to sing for us. She began by saying, "I wish my two brothers could be here in this struggle, but it was their misfortune to have died in Bataan." She wiped her tears and prepared to sing and then added, "As soon as I learned that the US. landing forces were moving south, I did not hesitate to come meet these brave heroes from the U.S.A." She then proceeded to sing a beautiful song. She was superb.

We broke up for the afternoon to take a rest. On the way to the headquarters I got suspicious and asked Captain O'Day how the beautiful girl knew that we were US. soldiers and how did she know we were moving south. Captain O'Day spit his chewing tobacco and said, "Son of a bitch, she must be a spy. No one is suppose to know all of this information." The young girl was arrested and during the investigation she broke down and confessed and surrendered her booklet; it was another UN. book. Captain O'Day was superstitious about executing women so she was put in the custody of L Company in the laundry department.

We went on through the town of La Paz and then, Dolores, where the Woman's Auxiliary service treated my feet because of fungus that was growing on the soles. We then continued, went on crossing rivers and hiking and, after a few days, my feet were raw and ready to bleed. We traveled to the town of San Juan where I was forced to dance their native dance called Tadek which had the rhythm provided by a couple of symbols. It was quite a sight, this dance of mine. Everyone present nearly died laughing. We continued and it took us 37 days to reach our destination.

On Christmas eve 1944, I was sent with a squad of experienced riflemen to meet a submarine loaded with arms, ammunition, and medical supplies. The US. submarine Norwalk was to

rendezvous with us at Darigayos, La Union but there were problems since the 2,000 civilians that were to unload the cargo were chased off by Japanese soldiers. The submarine moved to a secondary sight in San Esteban, Ilocos Sur. My men and I had to return as soon as it became dark, while men from the Eastern and Central sectors unloaded the submarine. Most of our work, for a while, was routine reconnaissance and communications.

The Invasion of Lingayen Gulf

On January 9th thru the 12th, 1945, we were in full combat. Leyte had already been taken and at early dawn on the 9th the first salvo of the biggest navy guns buzzed over our heads. The target was Baguio and they were shooting from the sea; we happened to be between these two points. Baguio was full of Japanese however, four days of bombing and the landing of troops in Lingayen Gulf gave the Japanese plenty to deal with. Many Japanese soldiers and labor battalions roamed about in large groups, many of them were bandaged or on crutches without any notion of where they should go for help. They were not armed and surrendered willingly. We had no cages or compounds for them and we were short of food and could not feed them. We were planning a victory party but the celebration would be short lived for me.

On January 13th, Major Maglaya showed me a radiogram that said, "Technical Sergeant, Leovigildo Giron will proceed to Highway 5, 5th military district, and join the 14th Infantry Regiment, commander, Major Romulo Manriquez, to assist in restoring radio communication. By order of General Krueger, Philippine attack force commander." After reading this I wilted. I was ordered to go alone. Tears rolled down my cheek as I asked Major Maglaya, "Why me, and alone at that?" All he could say was, "I'm sorry my friend, but you have the brains and the know-how. You were selected; you should be proud." I packed my gear, my radio transceiver, generator, carbine, sub machine gun, and 6 extra loaded clips of 45 caliber ammunition for my M-3 sub machine gun. six clips at 30 rounds, not counting the clip already in the machine gun weighed quite a bit. My shoes were resoled for me in record time, and myself and the eight native cargadores that were provided to carry the load set off. The afternoon of the 13th, with only one of them speaking very little English, we all met for a briefing. I told them that at 3:30 a.m. I would eat my breakfast and that at 6:00 a.m. sharp we would leave Camp Volckmann and arrive at Camp Utopia that evening.

That evening, while I was resting, a young girl, about 16 years old, carelessly crossed the foot bridge. I said: "Watch your step, miss; you might stumble." She stuck her nose in the air. I asked one of the guerrillas who she was. She was identified as Miss Evangeline de Castro, the daughter of the Pay Master of GNL, Volckmann's command.

The order to the Commissary officer was to prepare my breakfast at 5:00 a.m., an hour before our departure. The cargadores must be ready as ordered by the C.O. "Yes, sir." the Lieutenant replied. At 4:45 a.m. the next morning I went to the dining hut. There, eating, were two elderly ladies, and the snob young girl, and a couple of little kids. One of the older women was the wife of the Pay Master, the mother of Evangeline. She stood and made sharp remarks to the Commissary Officer. "Did I not tell you that we do not like to eat with enlisted men?" Now, who is this pointing her finger at me, I thought. I ate my breakfast, not minding the old snob. I didn't care. My concern was focused on the dangerous trails ahead. While I was thinking of more important things, the Lieutenant whispered something to the old woman and, suddenly, her tone changed from bitter to honey-sweet. "I am Mrs. de Castro. You know Major de Castro?" I stood and said "Yes Ma'am." She continued "So, you are from Australia, hey? What an adventure! This is our maid, my two little kids and, of course, Evangeline, my daughter." Evangeline took my helmet liner and put it on her head. It was smelly from sweat. She slung my M-3 on her shoulder and marched around. "Don't forget me, huh! Don't forget Evangeline! call me Vangie, and, when the war is finished, come to see us in Manila." I asked where in Manila. The old lady said that everybody knows them; just ask who are the de Castros. I learned later that they were wealthy hacienderos. Vangie returned my helmet and sub as we were preparing to move out: "Don't forget us, OK?" The snob gave me a hug, and Vangie gave a kiss on the cheek. I counted my cargoes and determined which cargador carried which. The final order was that anyone who dropped the radio set would be shot. They nodded their heads and we moved on.

We crossed Trinidad Valley the next day, advancing into the sector of the 66th Infantry Composite commanded by Major Molintas. We spent the night in this area and proceeded the next morning with intelligence information sent ahead to be on the alert for a US. soldier enroute to the 14th Infantry and that he should be given all available assistance. on the fourth day of the trek, we were scheduled to cross kilometer 24, next to Baguio, but at that point, the Japanese were repairing a bridge damaged by US. light bombers. We camped in a ravine about two miles south,

where many natives joined us, naively hoping that the single sub-machine gun that I carried would protect all of them from the invaders nearby. I warned my eight men that as we made contact with the Japanese, as they began to chase the civilians, that we should all duck behind the bushes, being sure that our cargoes were safe from view. At the break of dawn, we felt our way across the terrain until we were near the bridge. The Japanese were alert, yelling and immediately pursuing the group. Our plan worked well, for as we ducked into the bush, the Japanese passed in pursuit of the fleeing civilians. We then quickly proceeded to cross the winding trail where upon we drew fire from another squad. As one gunman could not successfully defend against an entire squad in set battle, we ran. From dawn that morning until 1:30 p.m., the chase continued, with our pursuers firing sporadically. Suddenly someone yelled, "halt, who is there!" Gasping, I pointed at the large US. marked on my holster. I pointed behind me, "Japanese" I said, breathing hard. We continued running while one platoon of Company L of the 66th Infantry Composite engaged the Japanese. we heard shots fired to the rear of us and, in what seemed like no time at all the news came back that all the Japanese were dead.

We continued along the trail. While the natives survived the sharp lava rock with their bare feet, as they were used to this terrain, the soles of my brand new paratrooper boots did not. I skidded several times along the way, and as I recovered my balance, I saw, that at that altitude, the cows grazing below looked like the size of flies. one slip would have been enough to end everything. Fortunately, my rigid training in Australia paid off. Two more days on the trail and it was time for the cargadores to return, for we had reached the boundary line between the 66th and 14th Infantry. My cargadores were substituted with Christian soldiers. They could all speak english, and it was nice to be able to talk things over.

One problem that I did not anticipate was our lack of salt. The Japanese controlled the salt factory in the lowlands so we were forced to use wild chile peppers to kill the taste of unsalted pork. I ordered the barbecue to burn a little to provide a different taste, as the local help in the temporary message center we had set up was used to eating without salt.

On February 2nd, we caught up with the tail end of the 14th Infantry, then enroute to a more secure site for the protection of hospital litter cases and to ensure a more centralized command. Among the cases being treated at the time was Major Ferdinand Marcos, a malaria victim.

After putting my radio to work, all of their messages were transmitted. Immediately, a

strong radio transceiver was requisitioned. A cub plane dropped a little parachute the next day and the powerful and most modern set arrived. Two days later I was ordered again to proceed to Nanzabitan area to join the 3rd battalion, 14th Infantry. This was to require another week of enduring leeches, and wet and cold elements. we were to continue to avoid the Japanese. The mission was always more important than the elimination of a few enemy soldiers. In the afternoon of the day we were to leave, Colonel Manriquez, the C.O., Major Dingkong, the Ex.O., and Major Marcos shook my hands and wished me good fortune. Along with an escort, I had two cargadores, Allaga and Bomalliag, and I was very lucky to have them. They were hunters and knew every inch of the terrain. We crossed a sweet potato plantation where everything looked normal but, that evening, from this location, the Japanese arose and assaulted our party and killed one guerrilla. The pressure was coming our way, and the C.O. of E Company let us know that he could no longer provide an armed escort. We snuck out at midnight, and floated down the stream on a fairly large log. The Japanese were noisy along the river, and we easily passed them. When we hit the trail, I was cold so we ran to keep warm.

The following afternoon, we reached a village the Japanese had not penetrated. We had followed a stream for about two hours, therefore leaving no tracks so we knew that we were fairly secure. The chief of the village was friendly and, fortunately, my cargadores spoke the local dialect. All I had to offer the chief was moldy cigarettes, but we were received warmly and fed. The following day, we were given a half dozen hard-boiled eggs and one live chicken. We were escorted to the stream nearby which we followed, wading along, until we arrived at a foot trail. We stopped for the night in a place that contained many stranded natives. I asked my two guides why these natives were stranded and was told that the boulders and heavy brush, blocking out the sun, caused the trail to be too dark to continue. It was necessary to build torches to light our way so we could continue the next day. I insisted upon staying toward the front for through experience, I had learned that at the rear of the group, the trail would be well trampled and muddy. By noon we had chopped through the enormous mass of brush and, vines and finally saw the sunlight. We stopped to clean out leeches. One was already full of blood behind my ear lobe, while another was inside my right boot, how it got there, I do not know. on the sixth day we heard dogs barking and encountered a small village. We followed a trail leading away from the village and within an hour and a half a voice shouted "halt". I sent one of my guides with a note: "A member of the Allied

Intelligence Bureau (AIB) is on the way to your camp." The guide came back with an officer, a First Lieutenant, to escort me to the camp. The camp was clean, ship-shape, because the Filipino soldiers thought the member of AIB was a G.I. from Australia. They were disappointed when they saw a flat nosed, short, brown soldier. But when they heard my accent they hesitated and called me "Sir". Captain Mabonga was out on field mission. He and Company I went to meet a group of Japanese stragglers. The Executive officer, Captain Gregorio Montejo, had to open my sealed orders in the absence of Captain Mabonga. My orders were to determine the true activities in the Balite Pass area. Intelligence reports had shown the presence of a Japanese battalion moving south every night for the past month. If the count was correct, there were enough enemy soldiers concentrated in the area to push the whole of the allied forces back to the sea. Two well-experienced reconnaissance boys took me to the place, the top of a big boulder, that had a commanding view. The observation of three rifle companies moving south during the night verified the reports we had received. The following day I looked at pictures of Japanese uniforms in order to better identify the troops I had observed, and a green patch with an oak leaf attracted my attention. We went back to verify the tell-tale insignia. It was determined that the troop movements were of the same fresh division that landed in the Philippines a few months back. We changed position the next evening, crossing the highway toward the eastern side of the valley. Troops of similar uniform and number were also moving here, but with a major distinction, they were moving northward! This was a topic of discussion in the deduction room.

Induction and Deduction

It was confirmed by G.H.Q. Base I (General Mac Arthur's headquarters) at Holandia that the same outfit moved south one night, rested the next night, and returned to the north on the third evening. The conclusion was that the Japanese were putting on a show to camouflage a weak position. The Americans were ordered to cross Balite Pass and did so with very little resistance.

We could see that the Japanese were disorganized. They appeared in small groups on almost every trail, disturbing the natives and causing them to seek refuge within our military areas. In March and April, we were getting increased pressure. A movement of Japanese troops, approximately of platoon size, was sighted following the trail to our headquarters, and emergency evacuation was ordered. We moved to the alternate campsite which was always on hand for such cases,

evacuating hospital staff and patients first, followed by battalion headquarters personnel. This was my night. I was a U.S. G.I. and the soldiers looked to my experience for leadership and support. I move forward to the front line. At least it was a relief to know that the boys were veterans of the jungle. We plotted the ambush, went to the selected area, and deployed each man, knowing that the Japanese did not travel in the dark. Both the sub-machine gun man and the Sergeant remained close to me. There was a gate at the opposite end of the clearing we had chosen, about 75 yards from where I was located. The sub, M-1, and the Enfields were pointed toward the gate, while the carbines on the upper embankment were spaced about five paces apart between men and trained on the path below. We knew that when the Japanese arrived, we would be breathing right down their necks, I gave the order "Nobody fires before I do." It was daybreak when the Japanese appeared, and we could barely see their faces while under the shadows of the trees. Everyone was holding his breath. I drew my .45 and waited until the lead man was an easy shot. I fired once, and everyone opened up. There were a few who escaped the string of sub-machine gun bursts. They were at first lucky, but the M-l's and Enfields picked them up. I yelled, "Freeze - Don't move." We waited until we were sure that no more Japanese were moving. They were known to be very tricky, sometimes pretending to be dead while waiting to pick a target and kill at least one more. This area became known as death valley.

The evacuation party all moved out of the area but we had to remain in this place called Binalian. We had to wait till all the new huts are ready before we move to Nambolosan. At dusk, a runner arrived. "More Japanese on the way sir" was the report. About how many? About a hundred was the answer. When a civilian says a hundred, it could mean less than half. Again we prepared. The rest of the grave diggers were chased from Death Valley by the on coming Japanese. The burial mission was not completed. The site where the Japanese were was a little closer to the camp. We didn't lose anytime, we went to meet them. This time it was not an ambush. The Japanese knew we were there. They saw us coming. it was sunset, our scout also warned us where the Japanese were. The trails are narrow and the pampas are thick. We were going down on a slant and there they were. For a while there was shooting but when the situation became a hand to hand engagement, bolos went into action. Even the Japanese knew better than shooting in the dark. one might kill his own comrade. The Japanese are aggressive. They didn't give an inch. A Samurai swung at me. He aimed at my mid section. I swung my bolo toward the same direction hoping to

cut his arm. He missed, I also missed; this was a horizontal blow. He came back with another horizontal back hand. I pulled my stomach back as I delivered a flashing downward follow blow. I felt a rip on the front portion of my fatigue shirt. I missed him again. The old man to my left just downed his last Jap, now he came to my rescue. He pushed me down. I laid flat on a shrub. Old man Benigno ducked under the heavy Japanese number one blow, at a fraction of a second the old man launched a heavy follow blow striking the back of the Japanese head. The Japanese's head was almost severed. I sat up wet from sweating. The night was cold most especially in higher elevation, once in a while there is a little frost on top of some old log lying in the open. The yelling was changing into laughter, as the boys search the Japanese for goodies and souvenirs. Benigno and another boy pulled me up. "It's finished sir" was the report. I was ashamed, I didn't say a word. We went back to camp. It was dark and we had to feel our way back. I caught a few stickers in my right ear and on the back of my right hand, some varieties of rattan are full of stickers.

The following morning a runner came to report that our huts were ready. I checked on my shirt and saw a rip about six inches long. That was the thud I felt last night. I didn't feel right. Everyone of the boys had two or three kills. They teased the boys with only one kill. They were talking about how many throats they chopped how may arms and legs were cut off even how many heads were cut off. I didn't have any, not one. I felt I was left out. One of the radio code clerks was cleaning my .45 and cleaning out the dirt and leaves in the pockets of my fatigue shirt. We never tuck our shirts into the trousers. Its better for the shirt pockets to scoop dirt than the belt and waist band of the pants. There are leeches, centipedes, and one has no time to pull his pants down to remove the blood suckers, not on the battle ground. The old man turned to me with a snide look. I knew it was for me and I was a little sensitive about what happened only a few hours before. Finally he said with a consoling tone, "Sir, don't feel bad it's always that way at first, at least you are still with us." When we got to the secondary headquarters the S-2, Lt. Lino Patajo along with the battalion EX-O sent two experienced boys back to Binalian to put a couple of grenades under the eaves of the huts. The grenades were bound with a small dried vine to secure the lever, and then pull out the safety pins. When the Japanese burn down the huts, which is their habit, the vines burn out and permit the grenade to explode. This is their known habit. The old man Benigno Ramos was assigned to me as my orderly. It was confided that this old man was a professional Escrima teacher before the outbreak of the war. He carries a very long bolo, not on his hip

but under his left arm pit, the belt slung over the right shoulder. The bolo can not be drawn out like other bolo's because it is extra long. This scabbard opens on the side so the long blade can be unsheathed in a flash.

While doing other chores in the message center the orderly gradually eased along the idea of me rehearsing some more in the use of the bolo. He said that it is important to him that I must live longer because my job in the message center is vital. With all the hardships you went through, he continued saying you deserve to live a little longer. He insisted that I needed a little more exercise in the use of the bolo, for he said "The use of the baton (stick) is a little different. if you get hit with a baton you can always get up. With the bolo there is no second chance." I nodded my head looking at him more seriously. How much experience do you have in the Art? I interjected. I had 15 years teaching experience before the outbreak of the war, he responded. I know you have a little or maybe enough knowledge in the art but as I watched you that night some things are missing. You lacked the aggressiveness and this is common when you are half afraid. One thing you must fix in your mind sir, you are afraid, the Japanese is also afraid but he doesn't know that you know that. Knowing this fact, you must take advantage of his weak points. one who fears injury much more so, of death, is always on the defensive.

You can not win a bout in combat by defensive moves all the time. So what should be done, I asked? He assured me that I know enough of the Art. You don't need to know too much. Knowing the basic flows is sufficient. Timing and determination. Determination to take another life. That's better than giving yours. In order to build your courage you need to experience the sight of a sharp blade passing by your body and face once in a while, in front of your stomach occasionally so that you can gage your distance and become effective. While giving me that training what happens if you miscalculate and rip my stomach open? Unless I intend to lay the blade on you, you'll never be hit, he said. And what will happen if by accident I cut you, any part of your body I asked?

I'll give you one month's pay he assured me. The exercise began but I didn't have the taste for it. The rest of the boys induced me. Go ahead sir, you'll appreciate it one day. The exercise was disrupted by the messenger, more Japanese sir. Where and how big is the group? The usual 100. This time they are on the trail toward the old camp. No attack was the order from Capt. Montejo. The information was flashed by radio to the next company guarding the old trail about

2 days away. About sunset the natives were pointing toward the old camp, flames, lots of fire. In a few seconds a big blast echoed across the range. The following day a coded message came across the radio only 2 Japanese were found dead. I said, it's not worth it. Two hand grenades are more costly than only two Japanese.

When we transmitted all the messages to GHQ we relaxed a little. One message came. GHQ wants to know where is the assembly point of the retreating Japanese. The message was relayed to all sub stations. The exercise continued. I kept wondering if this bolo rehearsal will help at all. Another group of Japanese stragglers was reported. Only a dozen, that's all. That could be an advance party for a larger body. It wasn't and that sure was a relief. A squad went to take care of them. Everyday this month of March 1945 there were Japanese practically on every trail. The Americans were on the main road in the central valley, that is why the Japanese took to the hills. There was peace in the low lands but we had more trouble now than anytime of the year. They are weak, tired and must be hungry. The feeling of going to encounter these slant eyed bastards is like going out to the field to pick tomatoes. When it's finished we will go back, wash our hands, wash all the blood stains before we eat and think of how we escaped with our lives. I was getting bored but I always had the cob webs in my stomach while in action. Toward the middle of the month, still March was Easter. A little cub plane dropped a little parachute. There was a pair of slightly used shoes for me. The sole of my only pair was at it's last layer. Sometimes I feel the gravel poke my right foot. With the pair of shoes was a brown envelope with all of my mail. One important mail was my mother's. She is still alive, also my father , sisters and brothers except a sister who died from witch craft. There were bottles of atabrine, quinine, iodine crystals and a .45, I loaned my .45 to a captain but he got killed in action. I wrote my mother a year ago while in Santa Cruz, Ilocos Sur.

This time the Japanese were giving us too much pressure. We have to abandon Nambolosan. We moved to a higher elevation, a flat side of the mountain called Oliweg. The guerrillas built a little air strip a few months ago but only a cub plane can land. The Japanese must know about it they keep trying to climb the trail. No one can for we had to go up on vines in a vertical climb of about 30 feet. Now we are getting mortar shells. We can stay away from the mortar shells by staying in caves. We had our radio transceiver installed but we were on the wrong side to favor good reception. it was however good for observation. We had to move out. Two boys with

a dozen natives went to prepare Banew. There use to be a few huts when company K occupied the place once. All it needs is a few repairs and cleaning out. Our battalion consist of 2 platoons of rifle men plus about a platoon of administrative personnel. I had 6 radio operators and code clerks plus 2 orderlies. While in Banew, we barely had the time to exercise. We were always on the alert. This time we were capturing Filipino guides and collaborators. There were even a couple of UN (United Nippon) similar to the FBI. I have more compassion for the Japanese soldiers because they are bound by Army rules like us. They have to fight and be killed if necessary. But these Filipino traitors who helped the Japanese destroy our land, killed our brothers, sisters and parents. These lowly traitors do not deserve to live not even the trouble of holding a court martial to convict them. My sharp bolo was always ready for their crunchy throats.

Because of the elevation and contours of this knoll, a system had to be devised to guard all the trails. There are only 2 platoons of fighting men plus a handful of non combatants (although they too must fight) to stop the Japanese. It was learned that General Yamashita selected Kiangan, Ifugao province to be their final stand. The rest of the Japanese were desperate. They took any trail leading to Kiangan according to their maps. Their war lords depended on the success of Yamashita to hold his ground to determine when to send reinforcements. May be just a delaying action.

They came in early June, a rainy day when a large size of Japanese charge Bansai against our position. Each detail to guard the trails must be on a wedge formation. one must be on the front as point, and the two others on each sides a little to the rear. These groups overt in depth. I took the point on the uppermost trail. I choose the highest trail because by the time the Japanese got to the top they were already tired. Second any Japanese that slipped he had to roll down instead of up. He will become the problem of the men on the next trail below. Higher or lower elevation there were lots of them. Like any Bansai charge the Japanese are always noisy. Yelling and shouting, they are not afraid to die. If they don't charge their officers will chop off their heads. So Bansai here they come. The Filipino guerrillas on the other hand chew their tobacco, grit their teeth and swing their bolos, chop here, jab there. long bolos, short daggers, pointed bamboo, pulverized chili peppers with sand deposited in bamboo tubes to spray so the Japanese cannot see. By now my adrenaline must have gone up. one bayonet and samurai sword came simultaneously. The samurai sword was in front of me while the bayonet was a little to the left. With my left hand I parried the bayonet, I blocked the sword coming down on me, the bayonet man went by and his

body came in line with my bolo when I came down to cut his left hip. The samurai was coming back with a back hand blow. I met his tricep with the bolo. chopping it to the ground. Bakatari he yelled, I advanced forward. The men on each side finished him off. Another samurai came at me. I did an inside block and snapped a hit on his stomach. My bolo bounced off. The samurai was wearing a heavy leather pack strap to his shoulder. I returned with a strike to the back of the knee so he fell, I advanced forward. more were coming each time one skidded he went down to the lower trail and became their problem below. The trails were more slippery than before. The upper trails ran out of action while down below were more clanking of steel and more yelling, Japanese yelling.

I wiped my face with my left hand to clear my eyes from the rain and found blood stains on my face. The boys told me, blood sir. They can see as good in the dark as if it was daylight. Their eyes get adopted to the dark and can see the difference between rain water and blood. I felt the twitch on the meaty part of my left palm when I parried the bayonet. I didn't know I was nipped. It was getting sore. In a few minutes I smelt burning hair, I wondered what it was. One of the older men did just that to put the ashes with the remaining unburned hair on my cut. The blood stopped running from my palm. Later it was disclosed that it was the old mans pubic hair. He learned this trick while learning Escrima at his early age. With his pubic hair and a prayer? I laughed but it stopped the flow of blood. There were strugglers every-day. This time I had to take sick leave so I stayed with the clerks at the message center. I was asked why I have to go to the front when I did not have to? I didn't say much but I feel more comfortable with the fighting men. Non combatants can get in trouble just as much.

After a week of sick call a report of many Japanese took over the opposite side of the mountain range. We were on the west. A good two thousand yards to the east they took three villages. On the extreme right is Nambolosan where we were last March. On the extreme left is Nagtopakan and between the two is Macdo. We used to send harassing details to fire a few shots at night so they could not rest. This is a big group. There must be a regiment. They didn't bother to move even after firing a few shots. Instead, before they go to sleep at dusk every automatic weapon fires at the near by bushes for about three minutes, then they settle down.

Captain Gregorio Montejo, now the battalion commander had a conference with his staff officers but no one could suggest anything to drive the Japanese away. The natives of the three villages are now under the care of the battalion. That falls under the logistic program of the Army.

One morning after all the radio messages were dispatched an old hunter struck an idea. our side of the mountain had a clearing of about a hundred yards long. The idea was to make as many torches as we can and parade them. One torch to a man at about ten paces apart. These torches are clearly visible to the Japanese at night. All the native men even with a few young girls participated. The girls lit the torches one after another, some chopped more pine wood to make more torches. When the head torch man reaches the end of the clearing he enters a trail to pick up another torch and go back to the starting point. The same twenty or thirty people paraded all night. To the Japanese there probably appeared to be thousands of torches that went to the same direction and it's logical to believe that these are guerrillas. They know where the rest of their outfits are. At day break scouts were sent to survey the situation. The scouts came back shaking their heads. No more Japanese sir, this was the report. Now, the civilians can go home so they can resume bringing in food supplies to us.

After two days another good size group of Japanese were on our trail. Yes, coming through Banew this time. While knocking down antennas, packing radios, typewriters and records, a small guerrilla patrol reported to the Captain. They are from Company K and are cut off by the Japanese. They had to circle around to our sector. A few of them are Christians. They helped us carry our packs. We moved to Babaddi, a little higher than Banew, a little to the southwest about four hours hike on the winding trails. It's apparent that the Japanese could see our food supply drop area because of another site using the same identification codes. On Mondays we displayed our panels to form the letter L. On Tuesday maybe E. On Wednesday X and so on. We were being copied. The boys had to clear an area on the opposite side away from the observation of the Japanese binoculars.

Three days later, about the end of June, a small group was sighted near a draw an hour away from our camp. We went to check on them but they were in a deep ravine we couldn't smoke them out. The boys were getting concerned for as long as there are enemies close by no one can rest. On the opposite side of the draw two boys with carbines were descending. I yelled stop don't take a chance, but they were too brave or maybe they didn't hear me. Jaime Abasolo was shot with a pistol on the side of his left chest and the bullet was taken out of the right side of the abdomen. I was told they were crawling downward. The Japanese that shot him must have been an officer because it was a luger bullet that was taken out of him. The boys were discouraged. No one wants

to go down. There was only one thing to do. It was getting late, nearing sunset. I called three good shots with Enfield rifles and told them to pick out good spots and remain. We will carry Jaime and withdraw. In twenty minutes six shots were heard, two dozen natives carried the six dead Japanese on litters. They had to be brought to HQ for investigation. There were maps, the trails with dotted lines leading to Kiangan. That was a sad day for us because Jaime was always singing when we were resting. He was only 17 years old. He was a fast code clerk and a good soldier and a friend. We buried him near our camp with a full military service.

A new order by radio gram came ordering us to move out of the hills and join HQ 14th Infantry now in the low land in the town of Bagabag, Nueva viscaya. The same day while we were packing, three unarmed Taiwan's surrendered. They claimed they had to kill their Japanese captain, saying no eat, too much work, Me labor battalion, no soldier, no gun. We let them carry some of our heavy loads.

At The Low Land

As we were approaching the town of Pingkian we carried a white flag. The American G.I.'s were running like jack rabbits into their fox holes below. There were about three hundred of us including civilians and the families of the guerrillas. I looked ahead with my binoculars and saw the 20th (XX) Infantry Regiment. As we got closer, I yelled. I saw you in Hunter Liggett two years ago. Hunter Liggett is near King city, California. Some waived their hands saying FILIPINO GI's some Sergeants were distrusting. we bivouacked by the river bank. The boys formed three columns broken in platoons. I called attention. The boys were sharp, very sharp. Poorly dressed no shoes but the American G.I.'s were amazed. GODDAM!! No shoes but their heels clicked. These are real soldiers left over from different outfits that did not surrender to the Japanese. We were all very proud to be soldiers of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. Fighting for the same cause. The American G.I.'s were ordered to stay away, but later the boys were eating chocolate bars. I and the battalion C.O. entered the orderly tent, of the 20th infantry saluted the American Captain and introduced Captain Montejo. I'm Sergeant Leovigildo Giron, A.I.B. The captain ask what is that? Allied Intelligence Bureau, I said. Never heard of it he responded. A major entered the tent so I saluted. He looked at me twice. Are you one of the boys at Volckmann's camp? I recognized him, Captain Vaughan now a Major. What can I do for you son? he inquired. I said

I want food for about three hundred soldiers and civilians. The American Captain said in a sharp tone. Why don't you go back to the jungle where you belong. Do you have a name Captain? I inquired. major Vaughan pulled the snob to the corner of the tent and whispered something to him. The Captain turned to me saying, "so you are McAruthur's boy, huh"? Ok we will see what we can do for your boys. He prepared a requisition form as I was introducing Captain Montejo to Major Vaughn. He asked what happened to me? All of a sudden you were gone, he said. Where did you go, we were together during the bombardment of Lingayen and Baguio almost a year ago. I signed the form and the captain said, give us an hour.

I and Major Vaughn jumped into his jeep when I told him I have three prisoners. Captain Montejo stayed to handle the distribution of food supplies. I and the Major drove to Solano with the three Taiwan's to the 6th Division G.H.Q., G-3 H.Q. What do you have here Vaughan, an old gray haired man inquired. Major Vaughan and I saluted. A one star General asked me bluntly. When were you with Whitney last? I answered in August 1944, Do you know he is now a two star general? I said no sir. The supply sergeant pushed a receipt over the table. There you are son, three prisoners, this is your receipt. Your food supplies are now on the way. Major Vaughan tapped me on the shoulder saying. I told you we will take good care of you. The general said, yes sir, any-time. You boys did a good job. We went back. I and the battalion S-2 1st lieutenant Lino Patajo slept side by side, Captain Montejo was called on the loud speaker. Transportation for civilians first. First truck to Solano, next truck, still Solano. Third was for Bayombong, the fourth and fifth and the two last for Bambang. In an hour the same trucks hauled us to Bagabag. We got to the Regimental H.Q. and the order was changed. The little town of Bagabag was too small for all the American G.I.'s and Filipino guerrillas. A couple of bombs can kill too many so we were ordered back to Bambang. We occupied the public market. July went by and we all moved to Kiangan. That brought us closer to the final line of defense of the Japanese. We got there in time to bury dead Japanese. The American G.I.'s sprayed the whole town with DDT. There were many large green flies and maggots crawling in the mouth and eyes of the dead Japanese.

After a week it rained. We were warned by the civilians that the Japanese love to come down and spray the town with machine gun bullets. They are crazy they said. At night we wore our rain gear and hid behind logs and large rocks. All of the sudden a carbine fired all fourteen rounds in the magazine. Then the machine guns, the Japanese machine guns. The next morning

one Sergeant's carbine was almost cut in two. A samurai swung at him, blocked with the carbine and the muzzle was almost cut off. The sergeant pumped all fourteen rounds into the Jap. The Japanese must have sensed that there were more resistance in Kiangan besides the American G.I.'s. The American occupied the open area below Kiangan about five hundred yards. Their howitzer kept firing no one could sleep. Two days later we went on patrol. I don't know why I consented to go when there are now more guerrillas. The Regimental H.Q. and the 3rd battalion are here but the 1st and 2nd battalions are still in the hills. Because operation of a C-100 walkie talkie was not familiar to the boys in the message center I was convinced to try it out. I was the only one that knows how to operate the walkie talkie. I found out that in Panopdopan where in 2nd battalion is dispersed around is an air field. A C-47 cargo plane has been landing bringing food supplies and G.I. uniforms. The Japanese wanted this place. The 2nd battalion had their good share of troubles. They need an air strike that is why the C-100 was needed to guide the air planes. The order was to burn all the uniforms and food supplies. To one side of the air strip was a rice field flooded with water about three feet deep and in some places deeper. G.I.'s in brand new greens were wading toward the strip. The guerrillas jumped and met the soldiers in greens. Why the scramble I asked. One sergeant, a native, fixed his rifle and bayonet slung it on his shoulder and stood still. Now, he said, compare the length of mine and their bayonets. The American bayonet equals the height of the helmet or barely above. The men in greens in the rice field had their rifle and bayonet also slung on their shoulders but the bayonets were way above their helmets. What does that prove I said. The sergeant picked a captured Japanese rifle and bayonet and carried it on his shoulder. The bayonet was very long it was a dead give away. The guerrillas went to action with bolos. It's hard to shoot them because the Japanese crouched into the water only their helmets stood above the protruding rice blades. Machine guns can not shoot down ward, the guerrillas might be hit.

Two of the boys, one on each side removed their shirts secured it to the rifle like a scare crow to attract the attention of the Japanese. They will emerge from the water to shoot. The rest of the guerrillas picked them with their rifles one by one. There were three or four that surrendered but I think they were too much trouble to be brought out of the rice fields.

The American planes were strafing the Japanese position below on the opposite side. We left the knoll while it was ablaze. The smell of burning rice and flesh was in the air.

We set camp near the edge of the clearing under a big fir tree, having a clear view of whatever moves in the open. I dug me a fox hole but it was a little tight and uncomfortable.

There were tree roots too tough to chop with my shovel and too congested to swing a bolo knife. I removed my canteen and placed it on the edge. I held my .45 while I crouched to take a rest. once in a while I hear shots. These were Japanese rifle shots. They always had double sound, peek-boom, that's always a Japanese rifle. There were many shots, I couldn't sleep or even take a rest. I felt water dripping, it was not raining. I discovered my canteen was punctured. The following morning we learned one native got shot trying to move his bowels away from his fox hole. We believe he was shot by another guerrilla. The pass word that night was CARABAO. When challenged with the word Carabao one should answer, SANGOL (yoke). We left the area as the boys took turns to carry the dead soldier back to Kiangan. I let another carry the C-100. I brought back the punctured canteen to show the boys. An American G.I. offered 300 pesos for the useless canteen. I asked him what he was going to do with it. He said he is retiring and he wants to show it to his girl friend how close a Japanese bullet came to him.

At The Age Of 34

August 18th I requested a three day leave to go to Bayombong to visit my friends. They were our (SS) Secret Service Agents. They begged me to go see them on my birthday, August 20, 1945. 1 will be 34 years old in 2 days. I regretted taking that leave. Between Kiangan and Bagabag was about half a days hike. The American Engineers were constructing new roads. The Japanese snipers were also busy taking pot shots at the caterpillar drivers. My Khakis were clean but I had to dump myself in a depression for cover. A jeep came with G.I.'s armed with M-l's and light machine guns. They went after the sniper. My pants and shirt were soiled. In Bayombong my friends had to wash them for me that afternoon. Before dark they were dry. The news got around so the following day we were at the house of one of the Secret Service Agents. We had lunch. There were maybe 20 high school girls cooking and serving. I ate everything, food I missed so much since I left for America 19 years ago. An old lady said, eat all you can. You haven't eaten these foods since you left this country. After lunch we went to the market to buy fruits. Mangoes, lansones and other Filipino fruits that are not raised in America. 'I made 300 pesos from my canteen so I could afford it. I was staying with the Bonaneg family. Rosita Bonaneg was one

At the age of 34

of the (SS) agents. She was a young school teacher who choose to become a nun.

AIB vs CIC

On the way back from the market a Filipino lawyer attached to the (CIC) counter Intelligence Corp, halted me and wanted to confiscate my .45 side arm. I slapped his hand and said "hold it son". I patted my cow hide holster and said. "I can use this piece real well". He claimed I should not be carrying a pistol, only officers are allowed to carry side arms. Like hell I can't! was my answer. The corporal, a tall skinny blond in charge of the detachment came down from the bamboo house overlooking us on the street asked Manalo what's wrong. Manalo responded, carrying a side arm. The Corporal asked, are you an American G.I.? Certainly! I said. How come you are dressed like that? he asked. I've been with the guerrilla outfit for almost two years now this is all I've got. What happened to your holster? he asked. Lost in night operations. How can you lose a piece he pursued. swimming across a river on a raft. The raft got shot we dove under. We lost everything. I might have had more trouble telling him I loaned it and the Lieutenant got killed. What's your outfit? I said A.I.B. Allied Intelligence Bureau. He wanted to see my dog tags. Manalo insisted the Philippine Army had dog tags also like that. The Corporal said, how about that? Look Manalo I said, this tag starts with 39 million before the war. The tall blond asked once more. How did you come to this country? I said by submarine almost 2 years ago. The corporal grabbed Monalo by the neck of his shirt and took him away. The two girls carrying my basket full of fruits revealed that Manalo is courting one of them. The following day I waved good bye to my friends and hitched a ride with a 6th Division truck. It was going my way. After telling him my outfit, the driver took me all the way to Kiangan. I was grateful. He said he met some of the boys in Camp Murphy. They are nice boys he assured me. Good fighters.

About a week before the surrender of Yamashita, September 9th I was recalled to G-3 General Head Quarters Manila. I went to the Recreational Department (REC-DEPT) 6th Division for a ride. A sergeant said, I'm making the run tomorrow. Be here at 6 a.m. At 5:30 a.m. I was there. The sentry escorted me to the sergeant. He is OK said the Sarg. He is riding with me. About late breakfast we were in Manila. I had some more of my 300 pesos. I didn't spend too much in Bayombong. I still have about 220 pesos. I treated the Sergeant to breakfast. We ordered ham and eggs toast and coffee. The sergeant gave me a funny look. After we finished,

I asked the waitress how much, only two hundred pesos sir! WOW!! I was in luck, I had enough. Where did you get that much money in the jungle? the sergeant asked. I sold my punctured canteen for 300 pesos. You could have asked for a thousand, the sergeant said. Now he brags about how close he came to a Japanese. Maybe he didn't even smell one.

Jungle Freedom to Classical Military Life

About 2:30 p.m. I was in G-3 Major Williams took me to the clearing section. A AC Sergeant greeted me, "welcome back". I politely nodded with a smile. Major Williams picked up the telephone and then he took me outside to wait for the commissary personnel to pick me up. As I was sitting on my pack a couple of MPs came to ask me where I came from. Before I could jump up a Two Star General walked in and said: "At ease". He turned to me then asked, are there anymore fighting up north? Yes sir especially at night. They always love to spray the town with machine gun fire. They do huh, those slant eyed leeches will soon surrender. Your comrades are in Camp Murphy. After you eat, somebody will take you there. I didn't salute anybody for a long time. No one salutes in the front, said the General.

When the old man left, three more MPs came asking if I ever got into a fight with the Japanese. About a year, a little less. I answered. How many did you kill one MP inquired. I don't know. When you fire a machine gun you cannot count how many is yours and how many is his. They are full of holes and its impossible to tell who made the holes. Did you use the carbine? another asked, the other said with reprimanding remark. He said he used a machine gun, dumb. That's a carbine, not a machine gun. Which is your favorite weapon? An M-1 , a sub or carbine. I don't like carbine's. It doesn't shoot far. I didn't have an M-1. I used an M-3 sub and my bolo knife. Bolo, that long butcher knife the other said. The sergeant hushed them. Don't you know these Filipino boys can make that bolo knife talk? A chubby fellow broke in. The boys said, hi fatso. Did you eat all them round steaks? He said, nope, but this boy will pointing at me. Your name Leobagaldo Guyroon? That's me. Follow me. I jumped into the weapon carrier, threw in my pack and carbine and away we went. Two blocks away and somebody opened the screen door. A man in white apron and a regular cooks hat, pointed at the steaks, round steaks as big as diapers. Pick you choice. That one! Flour or not, never mind said the other, just cook it. This boy looks hungry. Make it well done. Filipinos don't like raw meat. They saw a lot of Japanese raw meat.

I ate and ate, there was grease all over my lips and chin. one more? The cook asked. I shook my head. More milk it's good for you. He poured another glassful. I can feel my navel stretching. I've never eaten that good before. I could hardly breath. I belched and the sergeant said, there you go you feel better now, Pie? How can I refuse a piece of pie. What kind? Any kind I said, he said I'm not hard to please. The sergeant tapped me on the shoulder pointing to his left. That's the latrine. After that big steak and that pie you want to go there. When you get through I'll take you to Camp Murphy. It was already dark when we went there. Both of us went to the orderly tent. The C.O. took me to a tent. I shook hands with the sergeant and said thanks. He answered, I'm obliged. I fixed my bunk and then washed up a little. I went to the Day room. I was greeted. I thought you were dead Giron? We heard while you were in route to ZRF. Balete pass, that you were captured. How did you hear that?, I asked. Pee Wee (Rufino Duran) said laughing, you dumb bastards, you believe all kinds of shit regardless. I was back in civilization again. Dominos, black jack, poker game, seven eleven, name it. There's life again, a different kind of living. Somebody yelled, attention. A second Lieutenant poked his nose in the door. Somebody said, let the Lieutenant in and see his luck in the black jack table. The Lieutenant said, no thanks. I want to see Sergeant Giron. It was Lieutenant Guyot. He was a sergeant, now a Lieutenant. He was my brother in the lodge. I'll come to pick you up tomorrow. Our outfit is in San Miguel Tarlac. The 978th Signal Service Company Provisional is now a separate outfit. The Recon will be disbanded soon. Recon means lst Filipino Reconaisance Battalion, No more Bahala Na? I asked. Still is but a separate command. It was Tuesday. Thursday morning after breakfast the Lieutenant came. He asked, how do you like it? Son of a bitch, don't they ever forget that lousy reveille? He almost died laughing. We went and in about 45 minutes we got there. Sergeant Tanato was there, now a Master Sergeant. He pointed to the orderly room. I went in, stood at attention. Major Harry Croel stood smiling returning the salute. Welcome back Sergeant Giron. We thought you got lost. We were expecting you two weeks ago. The Japanese surrendered and you didn't want to stay in the jungle anymore. The Major ordered Sergeant Tanato to assign me to a tent. That's taken care of sir was the answer. Sergeant Tanato told me to throw everything in the trash can. He said I stink. Go take a shower, shave, then go to the barber shop. I was saving these two shirts the stripes still on. Yes but these are Tech Sergeants stripes. That's you boy, he grabbed both shoulders. I told you I'll take care of my boys. I borrowed one of his trousers. I put them on without under pants,

just so we could go to the supply room. sergeant Fred Rodriguez, now also a Tech Sergeant. He said, your pants size 29 waist, 26 inseam. Shirt Medium. Two Khakis, your neckties, shoes, socks etc. Anything you need, just come to see me. Not the other non com OK? roger Sarge. Dumped my pants and ties and two pairs of fatigue uniforms. Sergeant Tanato pulled a bundle from his pocket, gave me 500 pesos. Your pay will be here tomorrow when the pay master will come. The barber shop is there. My hair is long for a G.I. There is no barber shop in the jungle. The barber ask straight G.I. or medium. Sergeant Tanato pulled out 100 pesos, gave it to the barber, told him, you know, and winked one eye. The barber nodded saying roger Sarge. Officer's hair cut is what I got. Hey Sarge, before I could open my mouth Tanato said: you need your money. I arranged a 3 day pass for you. You'll leave tonight and be back Sunday night. Get one of my safety razor and a comb. is that 500 pesos enough? I said enough.

Lt. Guyot was detailed to return 3 rented typewriters to Dagupan. My home town is Bayambang, a town west of the highway to Dagupan. He dropped me by the river bank then proceeded to Dagupan. I walked to the man in charge of the dug out canoes to cross the river. The Japanese bombed the bridge so I had to ride in the tiny canoe. While I was settling down, I asked the man how much? He looked at me for a little while, looking at my stripes, removed the home made cigar from his mouth then cleared his throat. Well! he said Two hundred pesos sir. I jumped out of the dug out and cried out two hundred? The noise was audible, the owner of the boats came down. She spoke English, can you talk to this man I asked. Two hundred pesos is too much. They were talking in a dialect (Pangasinan) I can understand. She introduced herself as the owner of the boats. Do you know anybody in Bayambang she inquired. She told me her name is Rosita Cayabyab. She kept looking at me. She continued saying her maiden was Rosita Pagsolingan, but was married to a man by the last name of Cayabyab. I pointed at her face, Rosita, the one that always beat me on spelling. She said you were about to pay 200 pesos, were you? She got into the boat, picked up my bag and the canoe man paddled. She was laughing. You never grew. You are still short. And you? I retorted. Well, I'm a girl she assured me. Before we alighted the boat she told me to give a pesita .20 centavos. How about the 200 pesos? She said go ahead pay if you can afford it. I gave the old man a couple of pesitas. We went to my uncle's house, a retired military man. Before we got there she inquired if I know these people we were about to meet. I said yes, uncle Estanislao Millan, Rosita was already waving at the woman looking down at us from the

open window. They met us at the top of the stairs. The lady politely said. Please enter. Rosita quickly told the lady that I'm Leovigildo Giron, the son of uncle Policarpo. Ellen's husband? The lady curiously queried. I said yes. Uncle Estanislao offered his hand. I shook hands with him. Rosita gave me a side smile. She later whispered. You forgot our customs. You were suppose to kiss his hand. My gosh, that's a long time ago. My uncle ordered his second boy to harness the two horses while his wife was preparing to cook, she assured me we have enough time before it got too dark. She opened a can of sardines, we ate in a hurry and quickly bid bye-bye. Rosita said for me to say hello to my folks. We were in a hurry. At least I was, but we can't gallop the horses my tail bone was hurting. I never rode a horse for a long time. on top of that my pack was bouncing up and down on my back. Finally we got there, home at last, tears rolled down my cheeks.

Home At Last

The whole barrio was already dark. People turn in early to save kerosene. Dogs were barking at the sound of horses trotting on the trail. Along side a small house, a nipa roofed house we dismounted. My cousin hollered. Nana, Nana (Auntie, Auntie) who is there? My cousin said somebody you know is here.

My father quickly came down from the house and chopped down a low hanging dried coconut leaves, stripped the leaves and made a fair size torch. My mother insisted, who? My father lit the torch to shine on my face. Who? My mother repeated. my cousin told her, cousin Edong (my nickname). MY mother came close, looked at me closer then jerked back. Is this my son? He is tall and big, he couldn't be my father said, LOCO, can't you recognize his eyes? After all it was nineteen years ago. He had to grow. It's him he assured my mother. I was petrified. Not a single word came out of my mouth. My tears were rolling down my cheeks. Finally my mother grabbed and hugged me. I was sobbing. The rest of the family were holding moms hand, the others hanging onto her skirt. The entire neighborhood were alarmed. What happened? Who got hurt? Is anybody sick? The younger girls said, our brother is back. Who? said another approaching with her sarong around her shoulders. He is big already grown up. My other brothers summoned my other sister. In no time at all the house was full of people. I was counting my brothers and sisters never born when I left. This was nineteen years ago. I was 15 years old. Now I'm 34 years old. My mother was wiping my tears. I pulled my G.I. kerchief to blow my nose. The older boys next to me and my two brother in-laws went to cut down a couple of bamboo to prop the floor of the

house. It was beginning to creak. My mother my father I am home, home at last. I have missed you all so much.

In a couple of hours or so the big wok was loaded with rice ready to cook. The pit was dug so the wok can be set for cooking. Our sisters that are married brought jars and large cans of more rice, and other spices needed for cooking. One of the brother in-laws went and bought a marketable pig to butcher. The other brother in-law brought a few chickens. MY arrival became a big doing, a great celebration. It's like the parable of the prodigal son. At the later part of the morning I realized that I belonged to a big clan, a loving family. I have so many relatives, old and young alike. My uncle on my mother's side volunteered the use of all their chairs and benches for now the house can not accommodate all the guests. A rich old lady across the street volunteered to use her china. There were probably 60 or 70 people mostly kids to feed. I told my mother and father that I think my coming home created a big imposition on all of them. Don't worry, my father assured me in all appeasing manner. Mother interjected, after all there are quite a few of us to shoulder all this. I asked to get better satisfaction. Do we really have these many relatives? My mother elicited a smile. it was so unforgettable. The days of my leave went fast. I ate so much I talked with my family. My family was so proud of me, we fought for the freedom of our country, I was one of the lucky one's that made it, I thank the all MIGHTY GOD OUR FATHER.

Back to the Army Camp

Military routine went on and as the days went by info was passed that those that made 70 points can be discharged from Military Service. With my Citation of a Bronze Star Medal, I made my 71 points. The medal was for volunteering for a secret and dangerous military intelligence mission. The citation describes the mission saying: "He has landed by submarine in Luzon, Philippine Islands where he assisted in successfully extending lines of communication, securing vital weather data and obtaining military information which proved of the greatest assistance to impending military operations. By his loyalty, daring and skillful performance of duty under most hazardous conditions, he rendered a valuable service to operational planning and materially accelerated the campaign for recapture of the ISLANDS OF THE PHILIPPINES.

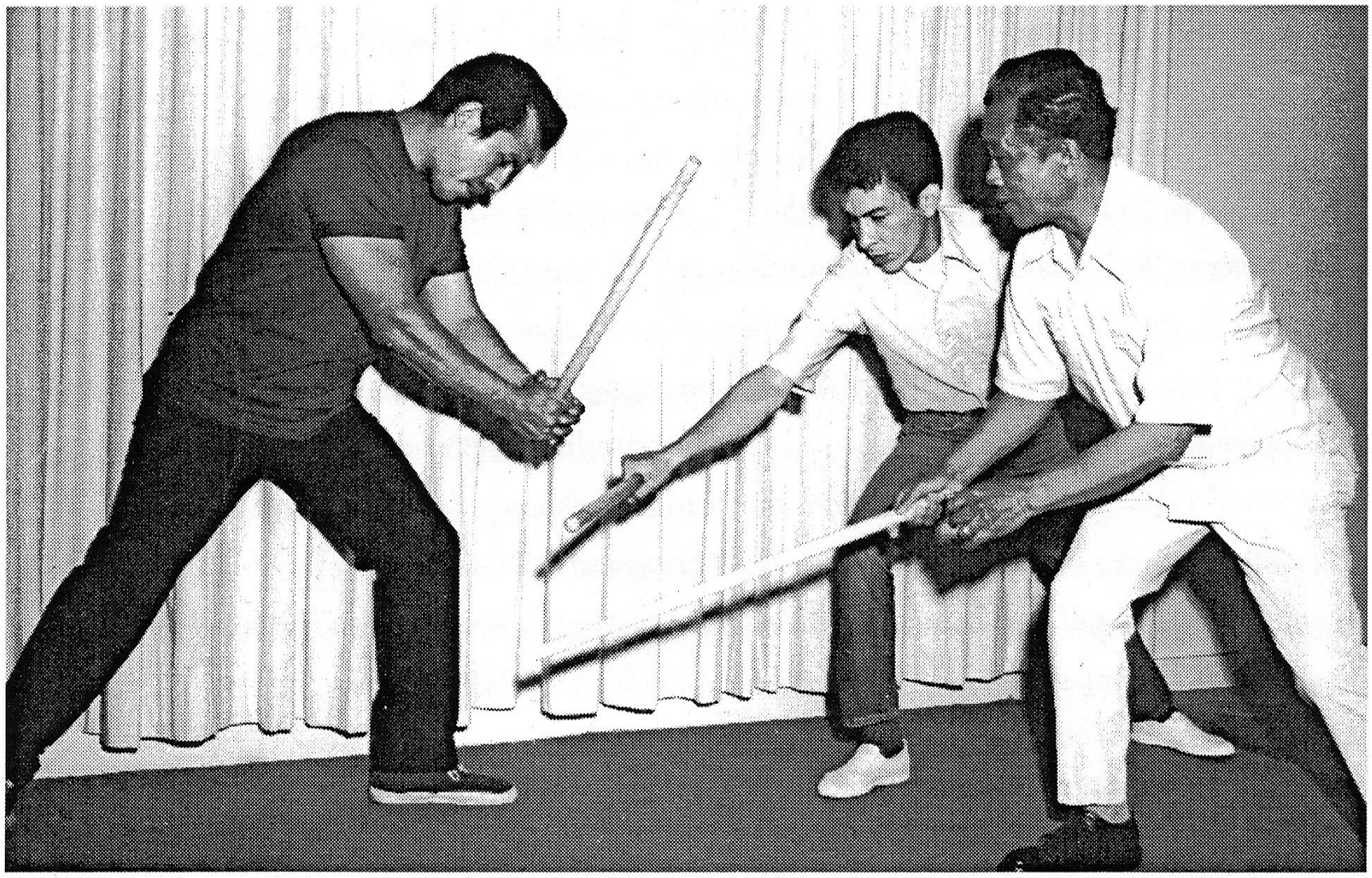
R.K. SUTHERLAND, Lieutenant General, United States Army, Chief of Staff

CHAPTER II

BACK TO CIVILIAN LIFE

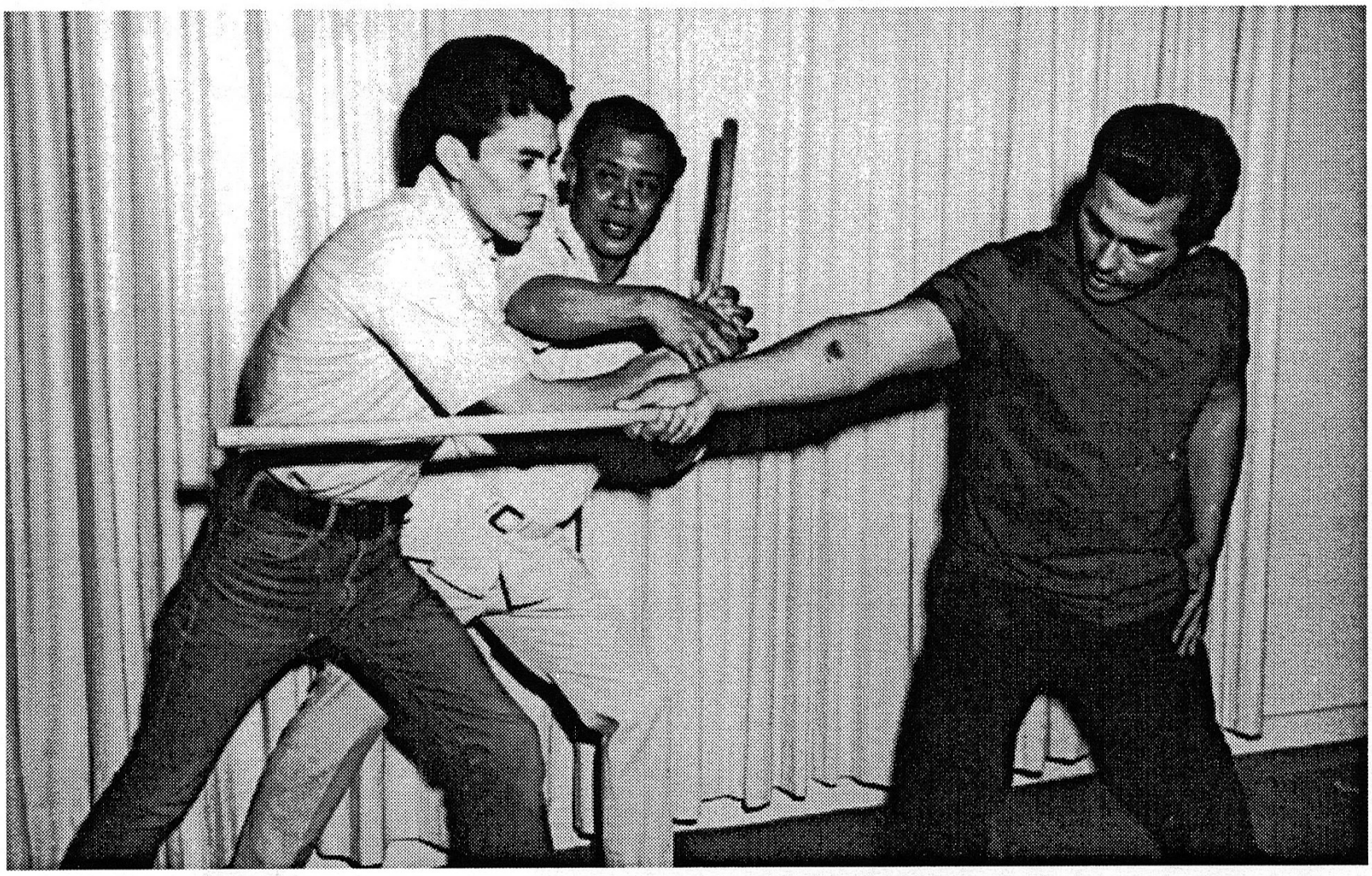
After World War II, I never thought of the Art of Arnis nor Escrima anymore. This includes the use of any firearms for that matter. I didn't see anymore reason because peace in the world was finally achieved. Korean conflict, Vietnam conflict and uprising in the Philippines did not awaken my interest to renew the thought of the Art of Weaponry. I got married and my number one paramount of thought was to move ahead in life after having children. I took interest in fishing as an outdoors sports but never the Art of Weaponry.

One day in 1968 eight nursing students were killed by a sex maniac in Chicago and the majority of them were Filipino women. Eight lives extinguished by a lunatic and not one of them made any effort to subdue the killer. They were all petrified. They could have ganged up on the man and would have been able to subdue him if they had the will to defend themselves. of course this stands to reason why they were all frozen. It's apparent that they did not have any training of any kind of self defense. Their purpose was to learn how to save lives and never equipped with the



Grandmaster Giron teaches the Art of Escrima in the late 60's and early 70's at Tracy Defense Depot

Grandmaster Giron during the early years of instruction.



thought of destroying life. If only they had a little knowledge of self defense! This thought stayed in my mind for about a year. Why don't people ever imagine the darker part of life that might attract their interest to something about hanging onto dear life.

Martial Arts Begun as a Hobby

Toward the end of 1968 I decided to open a club in Tracy, California, where I was residing at the time. The Veterans of Foreign Wars which I became a member, was holding it's monthly meeting at an old jail house. I rented the place for the purpose of teaching the Art of Escrima, an effective Art of self defense.

I use the De Fondo style as a base for several reasons. First, the foot movements is in harmony with another style which I teach after the De Fondo style. Second, is the fact that this style is a close quarter defense system and that the stick is minimized to 24 inches so that the student will be forced to reduce the margin of error. This will require therefore disciplined movement of the feet placing them at the exact or almost exact spot the Master instructs. Also the position and angle of the stick for effective blocking, parrying, deflecting and evading. Third, and a very important factor to remember is the fact that I do not teach the students to become bad. I do not teach

the children to become criminals. To the contrary, the students will be more disciplined, respectful to the law and to their fellow students within the club and to anyone outside the club. They must learn to be more courteous and more considerate to others. These are the reasons why the students are never taught how to counter attack. The extent of their training is purely defensive. This concept of strictly Self Defense is at the very beginning inculcated into the minds of the students before they receive the initial movement of the Art. This limitation of the mind spells out the precise meaning of the definition and the purpose of this club hence "Martial Art of Self Defense."

Close Quarter Training

The De Fondo style has twelve numbers. These numbers are determined by the striking areas. Each target area is protected by various movements and each movement is governed by existing condition at the time the strike is delivered. All in all the whole system offers one hundred twenty or more defense movements and usually takes a minimum of two hundred hours before the student can qualify.

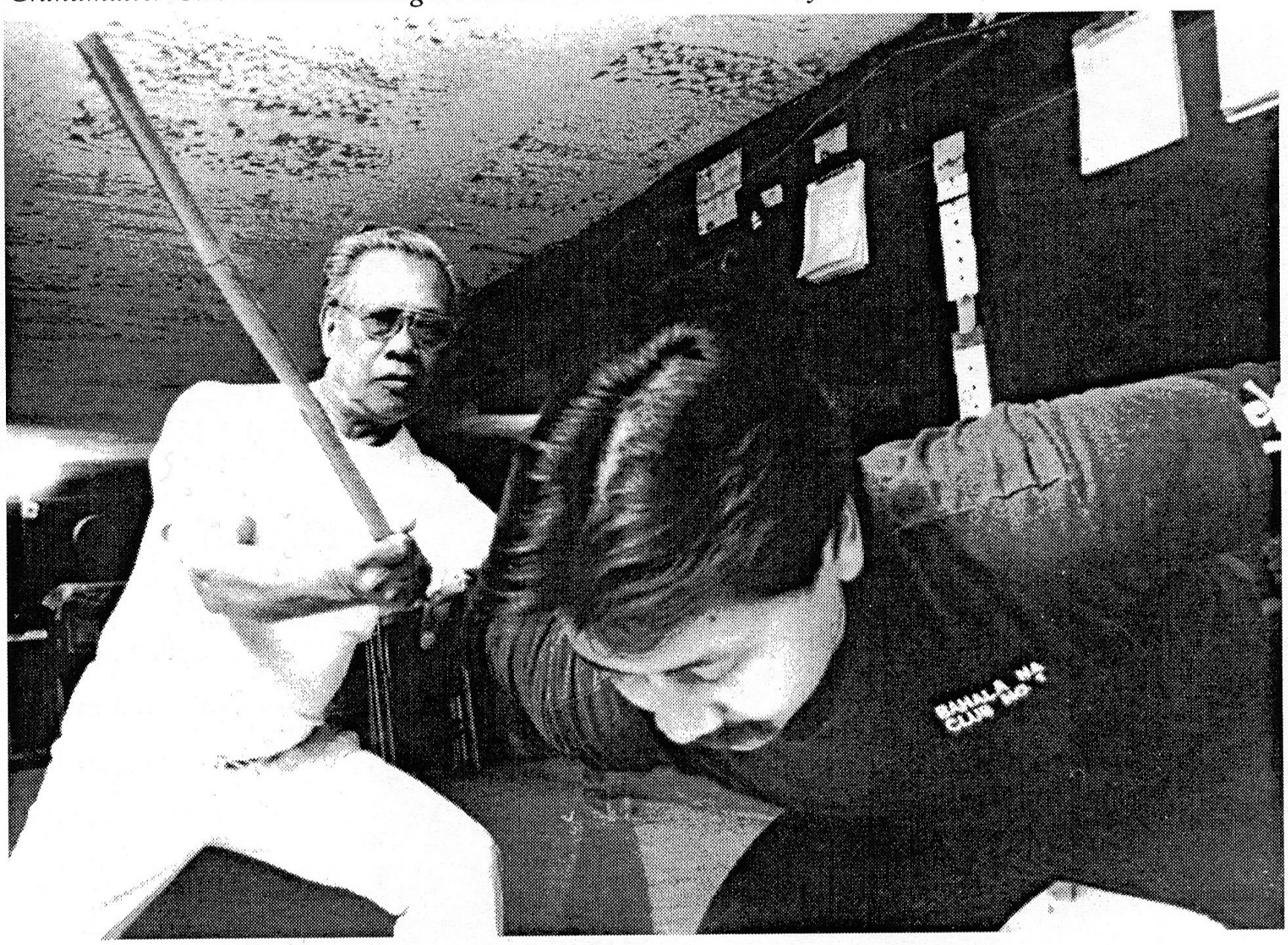
What to do in order to learn this art is to abide by the daily routine. Every instructor teaches what to do. The instructor keeps the knowledge of the art within the confines of his club. He will train with his students on what to do and what not to do in combat areas. Knowing the various environments of combat situations enriches the knowledge of the student in searching for the most effective defenses.

CHAPTER III

What Not To Do

If and when a problem arises between two people, try not to permit the problem develop into a state beyond repair. Do not lose your balance. Do not lose your temper. Do not use words that will discomfort another person. Do not use foul words that you do not want said unto you. However, if the situation is beyond control, that physical engagement becomes inevitable, do not deliver the first blow. Good Escrimador is always ready to stage the most effective self defense.

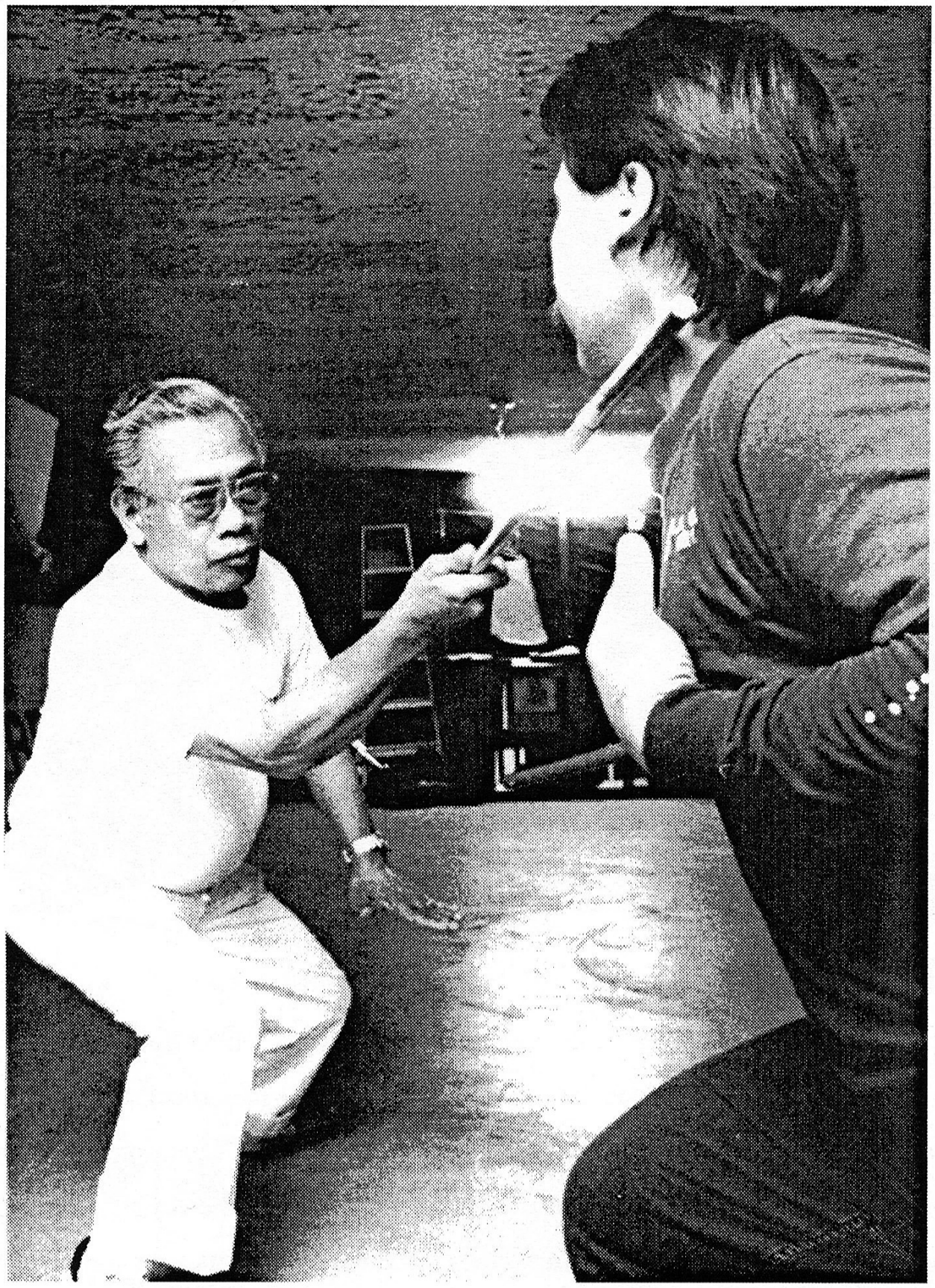
Grandmaster Giron demonstrating a vine disarm with Master Tony Somera



JUSTIFIABLE OFFENSE

Physical encounter can happen in smooth as well as in rough terrain. When terrain is smooth there is a very good reason to assume that the encounter is taking place in a community where civil government exists. There are law enforcement officers to lend against. This slogan should precede in your mind. "Don't take the law into your own hands take it to the court". But of course, law breakers do not breed outside of civilization. Their trade needs victims so it nay happen in communities, a small town as well as big cities. What type of criminals are these? Regardless of what they are, their criminal ventures habitual or not are always motivated by these four letter words. LIKE-WISH-NEED-WANT. I like, I wish, I need, I want. They always manage to enslave their protégés. As a result, tug-of-war begins to be more tense between these four letter words. GOOD against EVIL, LOVE against HATE. The nastier of all of these is GREED and takes advantage of all that turns the cheek but not always to those that are alert and always on his or her guard. Finally when the situation demands, be guided by the speech of the late President

Grandmaster Giron and Master Tony Somera demonstrating a inside technique



Roosevelt. "Offense is the best Defense". In all cases, which it should be, the truth always prevails. As I may state "This is the appropriate time to give all you got, BAHALA NA".

ROUGH TERRAIN

When conflict exists between good and bad, whether it takes place in smooth or rough terrain, whether it may be in big cities or in the jungle, the usual situations that the good goes after the bad. The law after the criminal, whether a small posse after an outlaw or an army after another army. it is usually a declared war. In situations like these the careful warrior puts strong emphasis on WHAT NOT TO DO in order to stay alive so that he can enjoy the blessings of knowing what there is to do. Let's be guided by the advise of General McArthur, to me and my group of dedicated warriors in the briefing room at the Hendorf Building in Brisbane Queensland, Australia, in August 1944 before leaving for the Philippines. May I quote. "If you want to reap a ripe old age, use a little imagination, supported by a little common sense and you will live to be an old man like me." End of quote.

Do Not

Let these guide you to a bit of common sense that you may be able to use in life.

The Do Nots of Life:

1. Do not let your enemy know that you are afraid of him. Remember, he is also afraid of you. Once you allow fear to get the best of you your fighting spirit hence your power is gone. Act superior but be careful.
2. Act defensively and do not take chances. Even cats with nine lives die but once.
3. Do not open your mouth unnecessarily. The fish was fried in hot oil because he opened his mouth.
4. Listen while you can. The last word of advise might be the word to save you.
5. Do not remove your shoes when crossing shallow river or creek, you might step on a sharp pointed object purposely placed by the enemy.
6. When engaged in bolo combat, when the terrain is not level, endeavor to place yourself on the lower elevation looking up to your opponent. Picture yourself on the upper position bending forward and downward to reach your opponent. Visualize yourself retreating backward and upward at the same time.
7. When your opponent is charging or assaulting downward you will be a law profiled target from his point of view especially when you are hugging the ground ready to launch at him.
8. If you are assaulting the enemy on a down grade and he is well emplaced, circle around to obtain an equal elevation. You will have an equal chance to use your skill in combat.
9. When vegetation is abundant and shrubs and bushes are plentiful avoid wild swinging angular or horizontal. Your weapon can be apprehended by vines or branches that your timing will be impaired and chance the risk of being injured or killed.
10. When using your bolo, do not jump around in the dark. If you trip or fall, it's hard to get up while under pressure.
11. Do not crowd your neighbor so that each of you can use your full potential without accidentally hitting each other.

12. Do not go to fight without a secondary weapon. You might break your only bolo
13. Do not engage in combat with a heavy pack. If you have time remove it so you can move more freely.
14. Do not straddle a log lying on the ground. Place one foot on it then jump away because a cobra might be coiled ready to strike on the opposite side.
15. Do not give food to only one or two out of a group of hungry children unless you have enough for all of them. They will kill the one's with food.
16. If you are looking for a stream or creek for water, don't go looking where there are no green shrubs and trees. These foliage thrive on water and usually grow along the creek.
17. When engaged in a bolo knife combat, do not try to chop down your foe with one blow. A light snap at the fleshy part of the body especially on muscles will cut to the bone, assuming your bolo is sharp. To cut across the bone hoping to sever the portion of the body is taking a chance of breaking your bolo. If it does not break, chances are that the bolo will get stuck and since a dying man does not always fall down to your favor you might not recover your bolo on time.

The Do Nots of War:

1. Do not try to be a super hero. It's better to stand proud and erect although your chest is bare of medals than to be decorated posthumously.
2. Do not go ahead of your group. stay abreast with them. Flying bullets do not recognize your uniform from behind, especially bullets from automatic weapons.
3. Do not outrun your group believing you will find a better cover if you get there first. Careless footing can break your leg and you might not get there at all.
4. Do not think the next fox hole is safer than yours. You might get mowed down before you get to the next one.
5. When on sniper mission do not use or carry anything that glitters that might give you away.
6. Do not be too eager to hit your second target lest you will be spotted soon.
7. Do not load the chamber of your rifle more than one round at a time. Reload your piece slow and easy and catch your empty shells. Keep them in your pocket if you are on a tree. The empty shells will give you away.

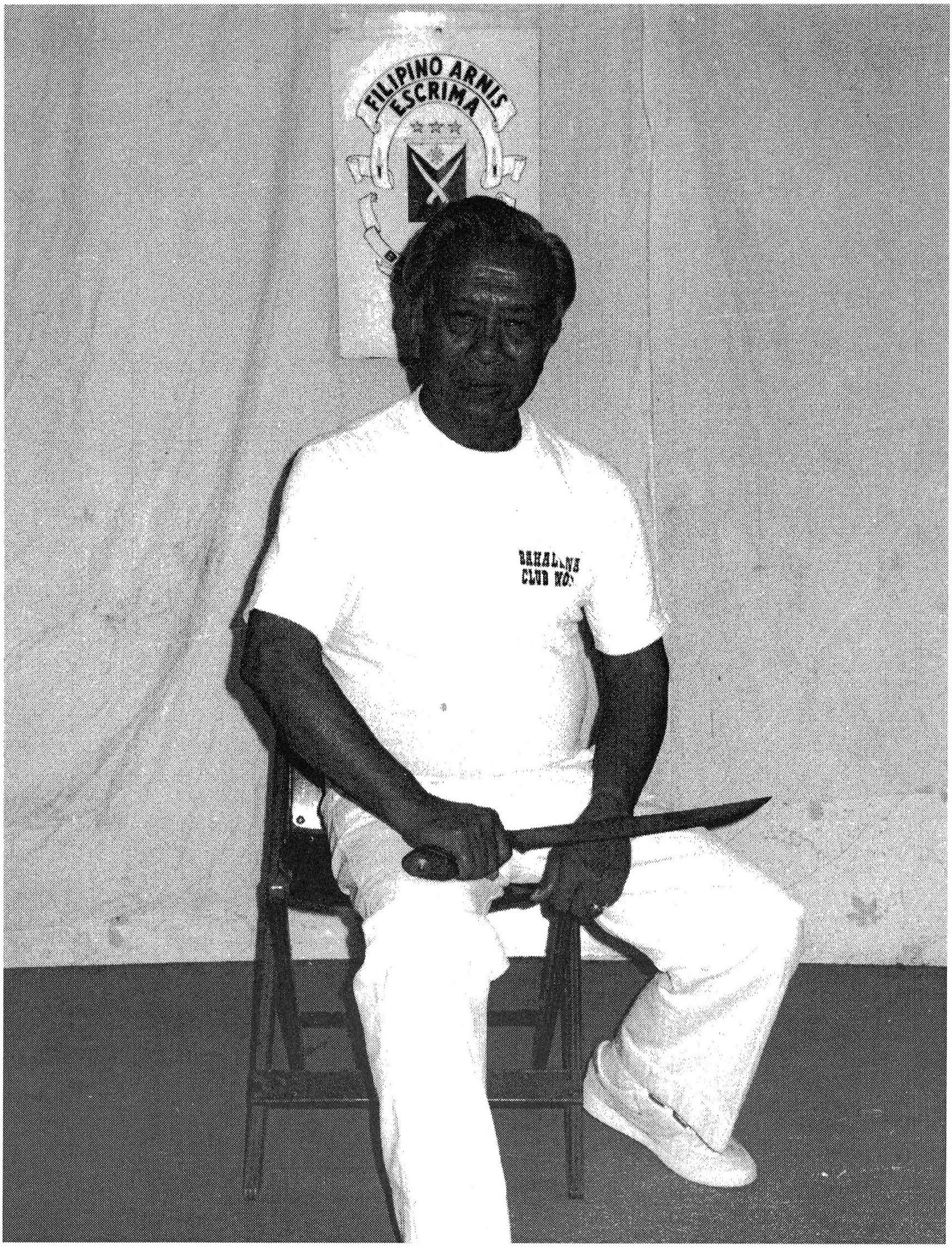
8. Do not make sudden moves that are not as natural as the prevailing wind. If you do, you might never move again.
9. Do not make trails leading to your sniper's nest. It's a give away.
10. Do not panic if you get injured you should be equipped properly with a first aid kit and know how to use it.
11. During night operation and encounter avoid shooting lest you hit your own comrades. Use you bolo or bayonet.
12. Do not fight the war by yourself. Always belong to a team and help each other.
13. Do not be too eager to pick a souvenir. It might be rigged for a booby trap.
14. When trailing small patrols do not be fooled by the foot prints. Observe also the direction the grass is bent. That's where the patrol went. They might deliberately walk backward to deceive you.
15. Do not trust civilian guides especially when they walk too far ahead of your group. They might lead you to an ambush.
16. Do not walk blindly in the jungle. Investigate hanging leaves or branches on your trail especially from foot to head elevation. There might be trip vine for booby trap snare.
17. Always remember how many and who are the civilians traveling with you. You want to know why all of a sudden one is missing, or one or two were added to the group.
18. If you have been operating in an area long enough to know the trails do not fail to understand the reason for the sudden noise and flight of birds. If you are passing through and you are a familiar sight to them, they simply fly away from the trail then come back to look for food without making alarming noises. Dogs also bark more intently when unfamiliar persons and smells come by.
19. If you see smoke arising amidst a grove of trees do not fail to listen for dogs barking or cock crowing at dawn. if these sounds are not present, it is a temporary camp. It could be your enemy.
20. When identifying sounds and speech especially at night when you can not see who you are communicating with, do not fail to remember that the average Japanese can not pronounce the letter "L". It will always come out "AIR". To the contrary to the Chinese the letter "RI" will always come out "Lit."

21. When dinner is disturbed or if a dining table is found and you try to identify whose table this is, do not assume that the Chinese and Japanese have the same habits. Japanese always eat the last grain of rice in their bowl. They will pour a little tea to swallow the last grain. Also the table is neat. The Chinese will care less if particles of food are in the bowl or on the table, bones under the table if in a camp and portrays a distinct difference in table habits.
22. When you want to avoid molestation of the girls, the Japanese are very particular about having contact with girls with (TB) tuberculosis of the lung.
23. Unless you want to aggravate a Japanese soldier, never call him "DOROBO" this means bandit. He will charge bansai right away.
24. Never salute or call your officer "Sir". He is the favorite target of the sniper.
25. Even if all your comrades are all good buddies, it's been known that men under tremendous pressure will change to beast. one might cut your throat for a simple souvenir.

It is the purpose of the author to mention the many don'ts of life in war as he experienced. He is sure there are many more situations to avoid especially in other theaters of operation. By knowing these don't and how to avoid them can provide the extension of ones precious life. The things to do will come easy as one goes along through training, through the borrowed experience of those that lived long enough to tell and foremost by understanding various situations as may be suggested by existing conditions and circumstances. It is a common slogan in civilian life to "live and learn". In war one must "learn and live".

The author, now in his declining years at 80 is still teaching the art of Escrima for a hobby after retiring from Federal service of 30 year's long.

At the age of 75, Grandmaster Giron



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At the age of 85 Grandmaster Giron and his heir Master Tony Somera

Leo M Giron
Grand Master

In the late 1960's I had the pleasure of training under Grandmaster Giron when very few people knew of the existence of Escrima. I found Grandmaster Giron to be very humble, generous, patient and a giving instructor both in time and knowledge. One of the highlights of my martial arts career occurred on December 26, 1973, when I became the first student to graduate from his system. I truly admire and love this man. I consider him to be my "second father".

Dan Inosanto

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